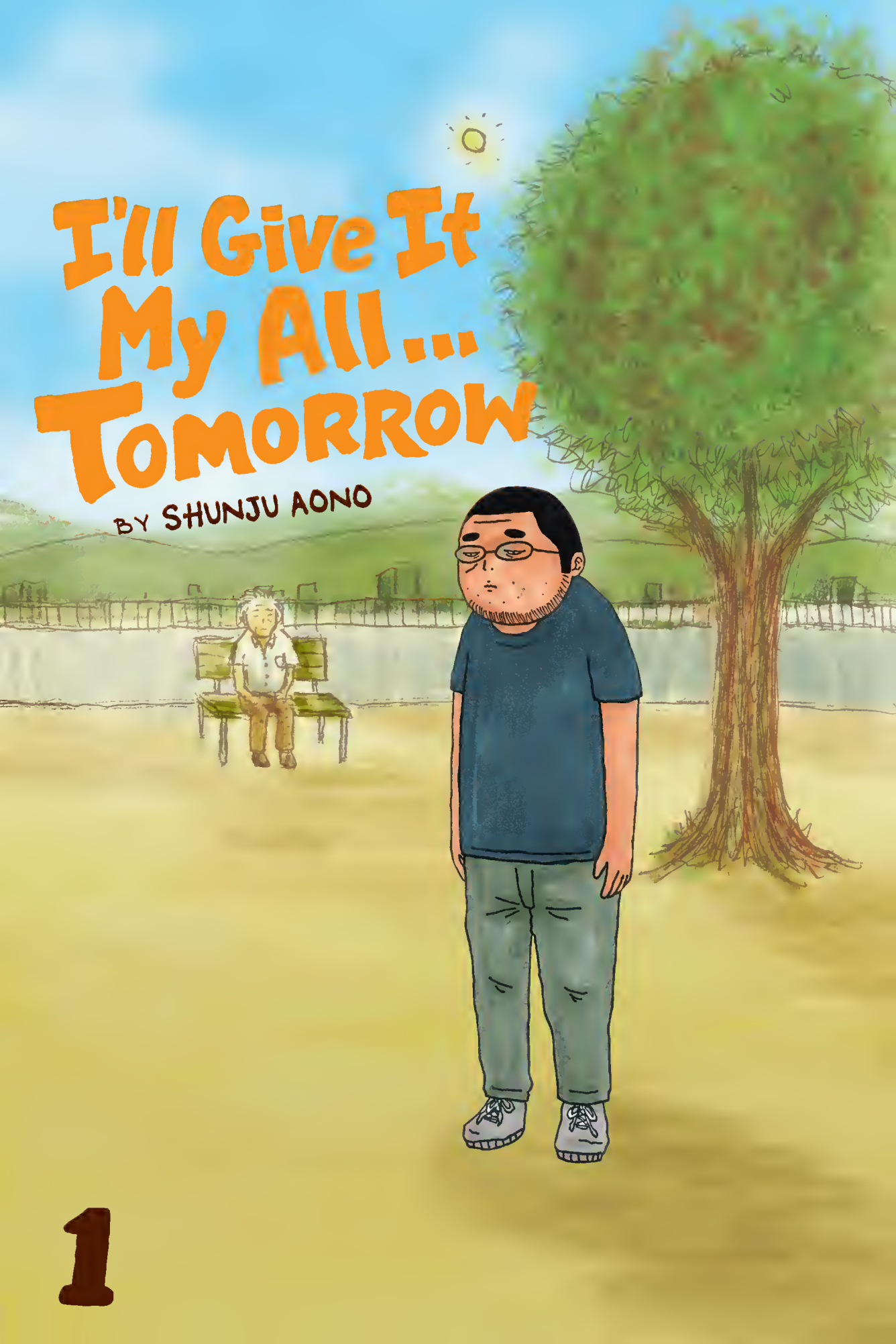
I'll Give It My All... Tomorrow
BY SHUNJU AONO
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I'll Give It My All... Tomorrow

BY SHUNJU AONO

1

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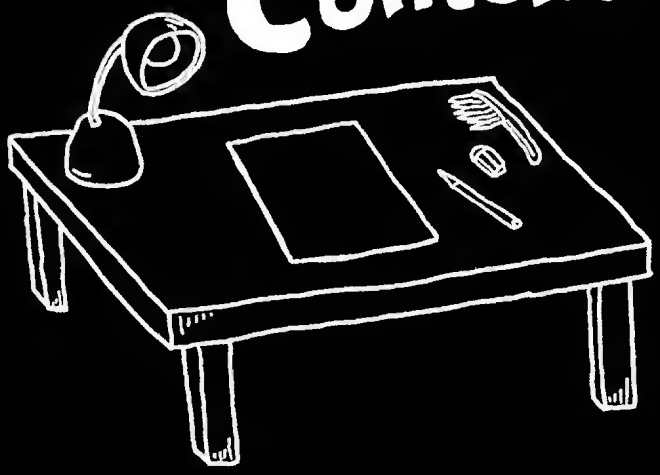

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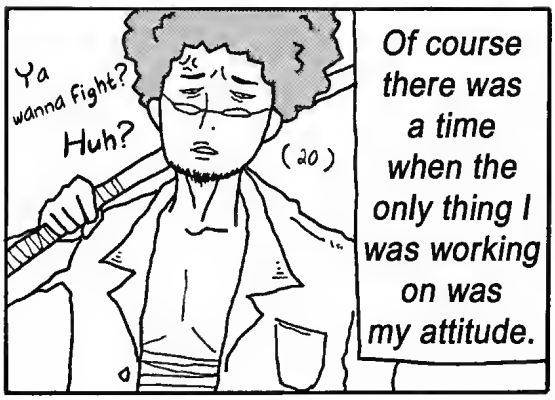
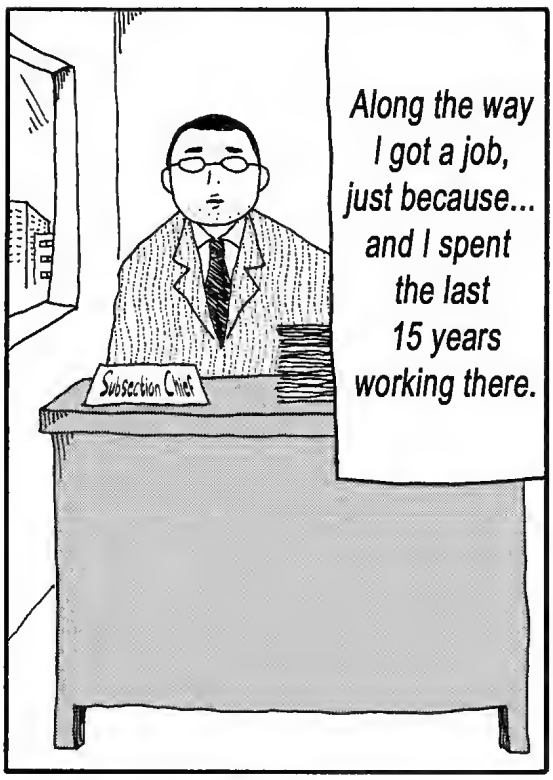
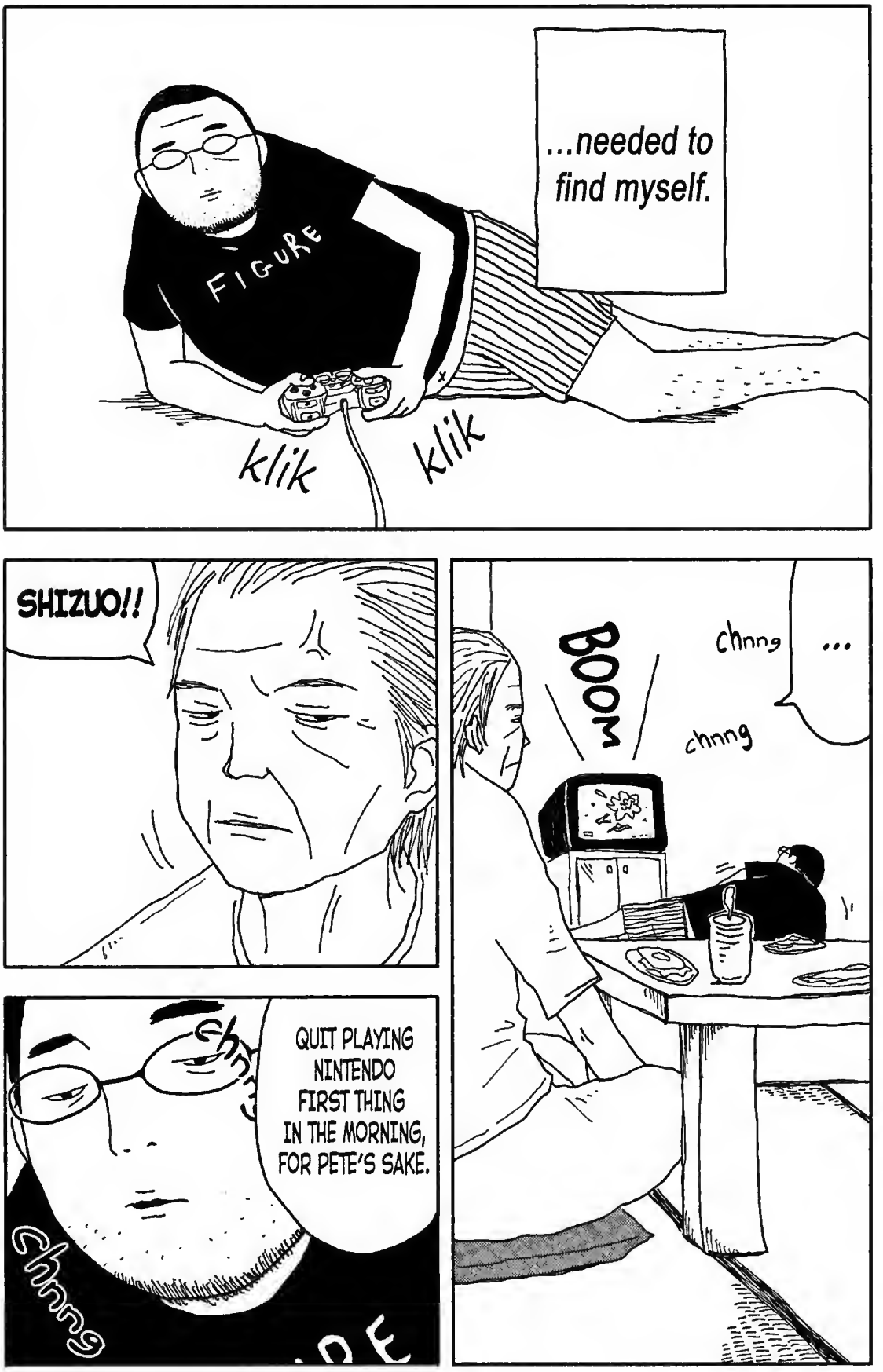
Kaleidoscope

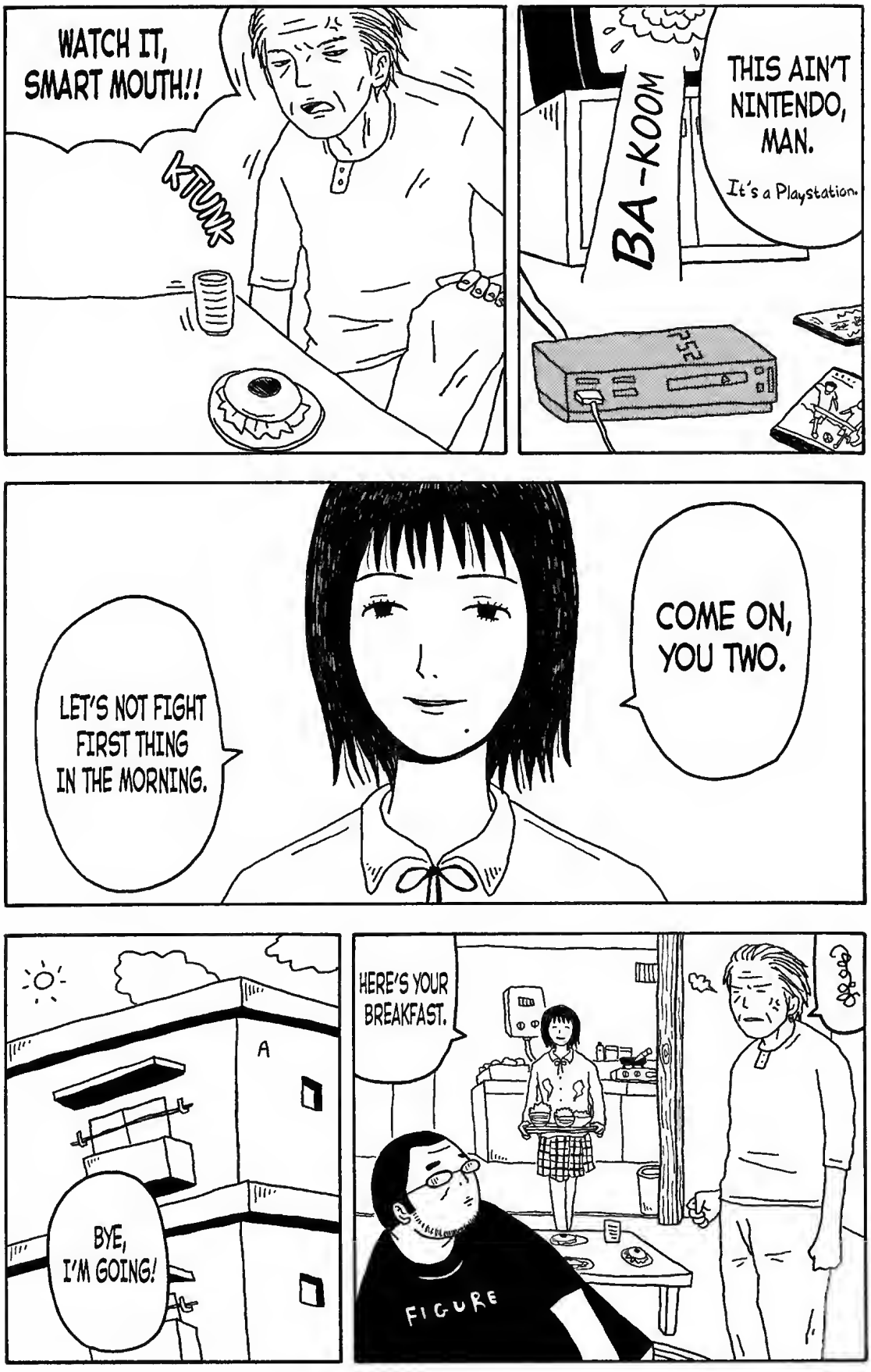




Now, if you'd asked me what was wrong with my life...

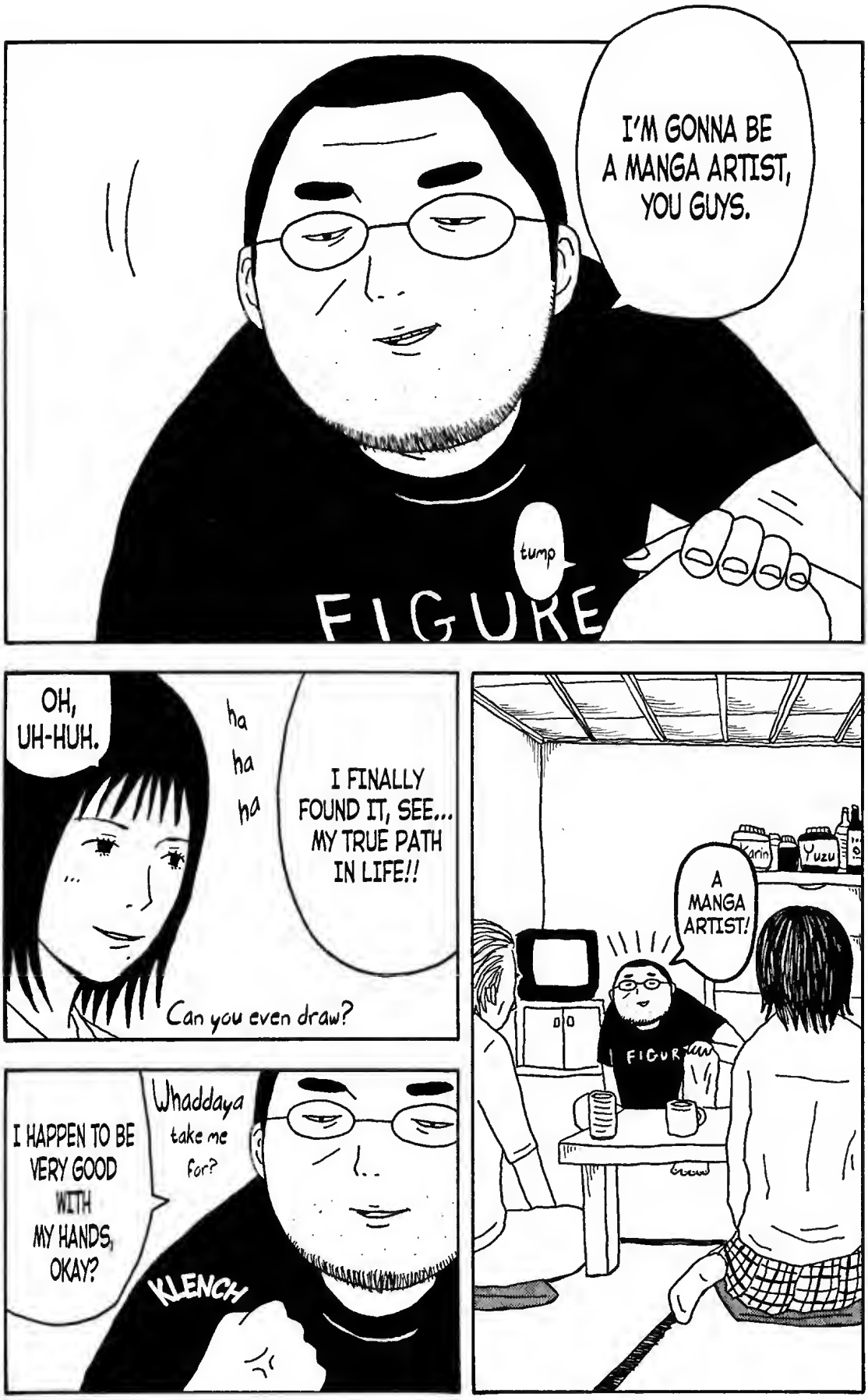
...I couldn't really have told you.

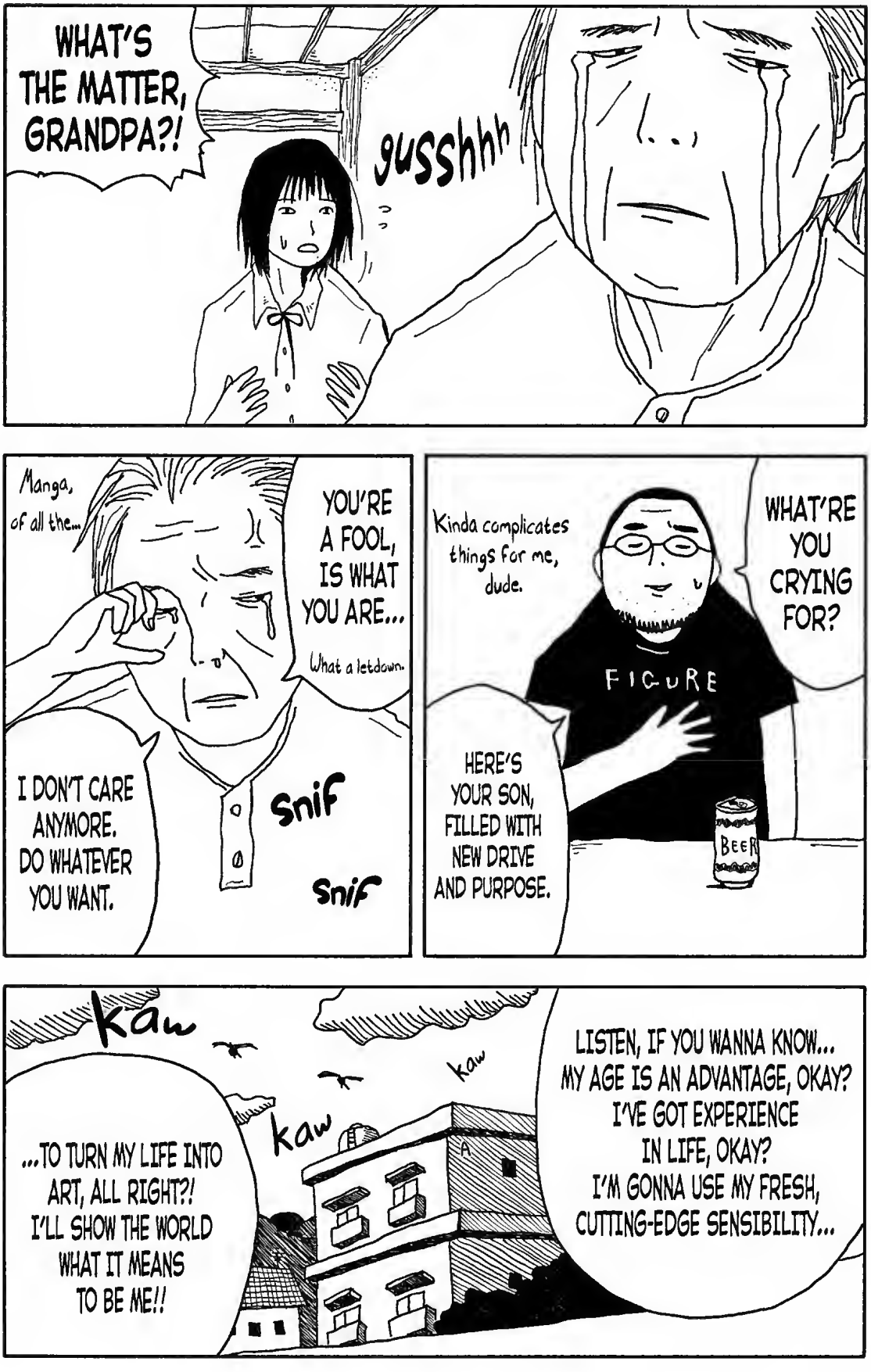

...needed to find myself.
FIGURE
klik
klik
SHIZUO!!
BOOM
chnng
...
chnng
QUIT PLAYING NINTENDO FIRST THING IN THE MORNING, FOR PETE'S SAKE.
chnng

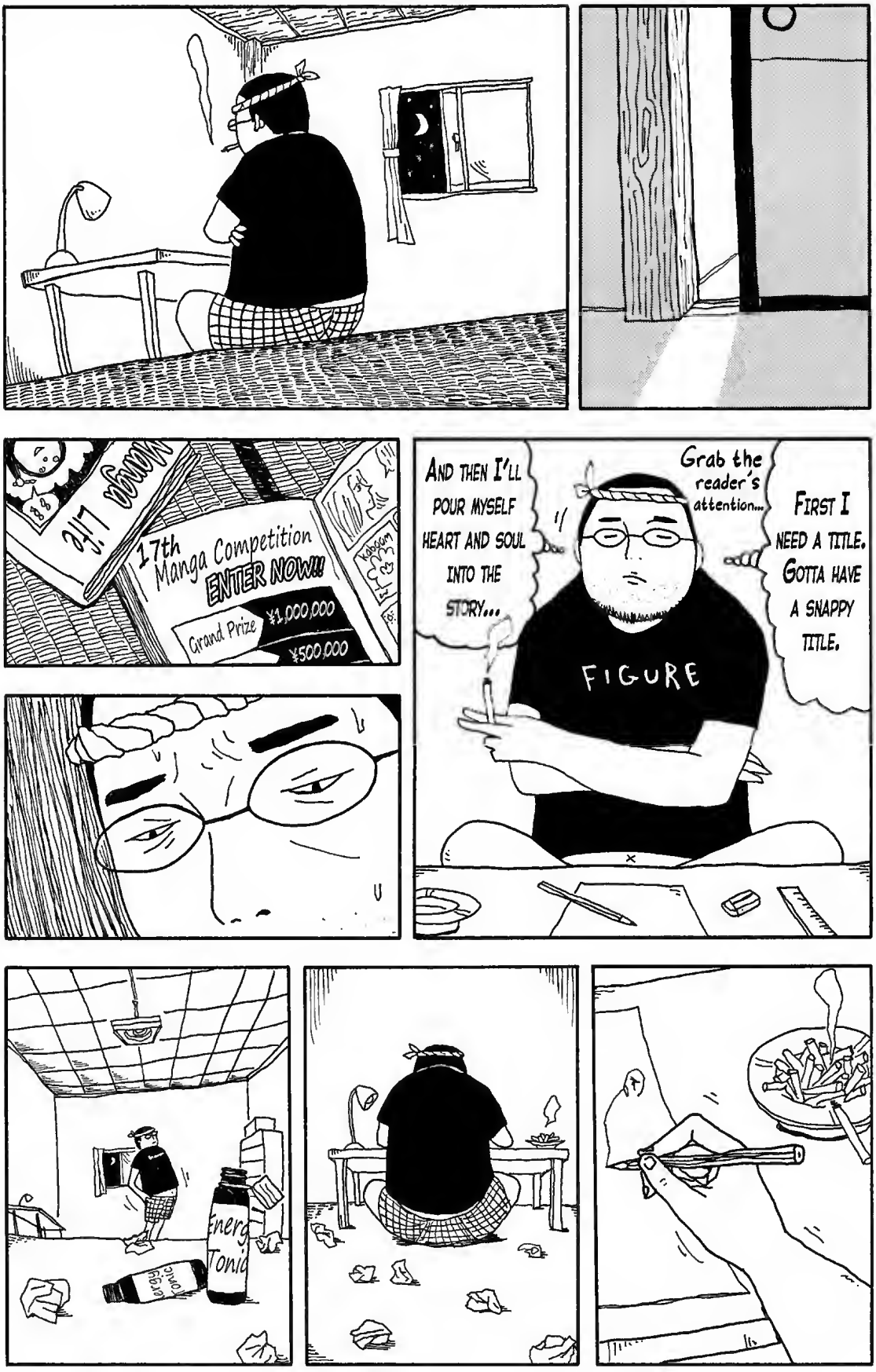

WATCH IT, SMART MOUTH!!
KTUNK
BA-KOOM
THIS AIN'T NINTENDO, MAN.
It's a Playstation.
COME ON, YOU TWO.
LET'S NOT FIGHT FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.
BYE, I'M GOING!
HERE'S YOUR BREAKFAST.
FIGURE

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOURSELF, ANYWAY?
!
HEY, YOU!
8:20
...
YOU ARE WAY PAST THE AGE TO BE SAYING STUFF LIKE THAT.
I MEAN, COME ON... YOU DON'T WANT ANY REGRETS? YOU WANT TO FIND THE REAL YOU?
THINK LONG AND HARD IF YOU OUGHT TO BE DOING THIS.
...
SUZUKO'S STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL.
YOU GOT A DAUGHTER, REMEMBER?

It's not like the idea was to spend my days playing video games and wandering around the neighborhood.
FIGURE
Snack
hoot-toot
hoot-toot
I don't need him to tell me.
...
I've started having panic attacks lately, where my heart starts pounding.
HALT
...
FIGURE
MANGA
Until today.
THAT'S IT!
It's been a month since I quit my job...
phlap
phlap
FIGURE
MANGA
BEER
And forget about finding myself, I've totally been **losing** myself...


I'M GONNA BE A MANGA ARTIST, YOU GUYS.
tump
FIGURE
OH, UH-HUH.
...
ha ha ha
I FINALLY FOUND IT, SEE... MY TRUE PATH IN LIFE!!
Can you even draw?
A MANGA ARTIST!
Yarin
Yuzu
FIGUR
I HAPPEN TO BE VERY GOOD WITH MY HANDS, OKAY?
Whaddaya take me for?
KLENCH

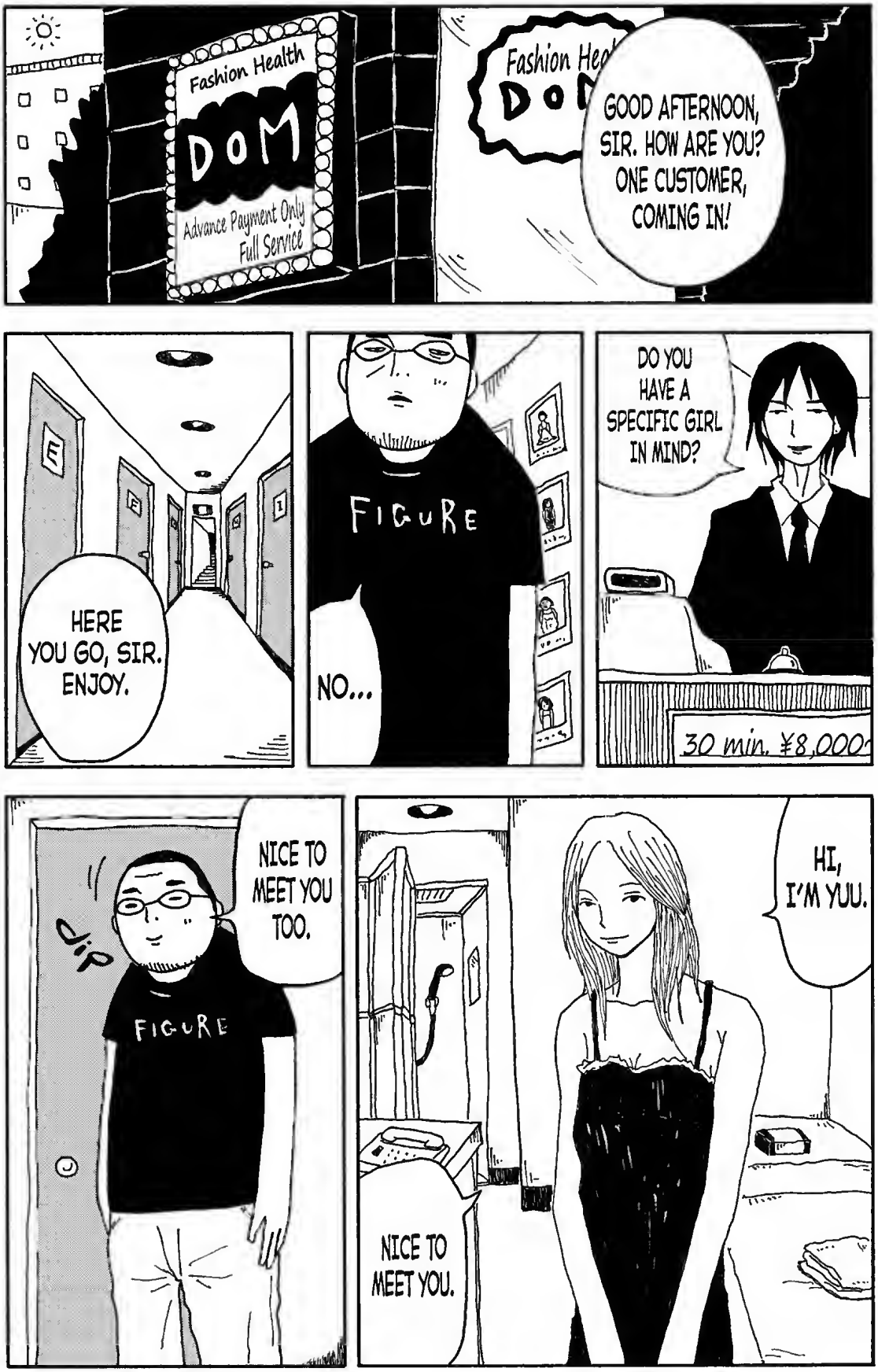

WHAT'S THE MATTER, GRANDPA?!
gusshhh
Manga, of all the...
YOU'RE A FOOL, IS WHAT YOU ARE...
What a letdown.
I DON'T CARE ANYMORE. DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
Snif
Snif
Kinda complicates things for me, dude.
WHAT'RE YOU CRYING FOR?
FIGURE
BEER
HERE'S YOUR SON, FILLED WITH NEW DRIVE AND PURPOSE.
kaw
kaw
kaw
...TO TURN MY LIFE INTO ART, ALL RIGHT?! I'LL SHOW THE WORLD WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ME!!
LISTEN, IF YOU WANNA KNOW... MY AGE IS AN ADVANTAGE, OKAY? I'VE GOT EXPERIENCE IN LIFE, OKAY? I'M GONNA USE MY FRESH, CUTTING-EDGE SENSIBILITY...


Manga Life
17th Manga Competition
ENTER NOW!!
Grand Prize
¥1,000,000
¥500,000
Kaboom!
AND THEN I'LL POUR MYSELF HEART AND SOUL INTO THE STORY...
Grab the reader's attention...
FIRST I NEED A TITLE. GOTTA HAVE A SNAPPY TITLE.
FIGURE
Energy Tonic

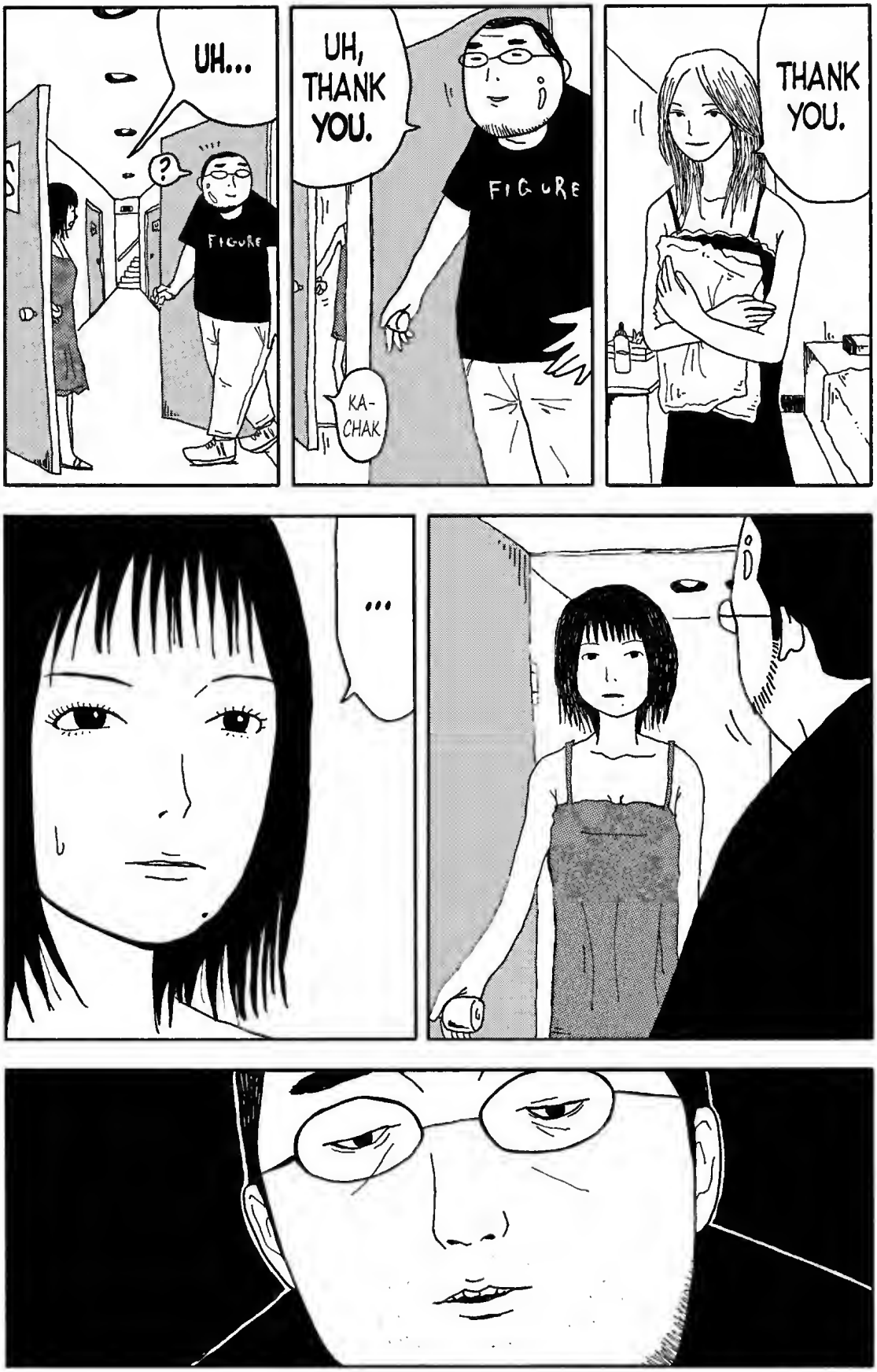
chrp
chrp
...nothing to say...
I've got...
FIGURE
Huh. Who knew?
HEY THERE...
Being a manga artist is pretty darn hard...

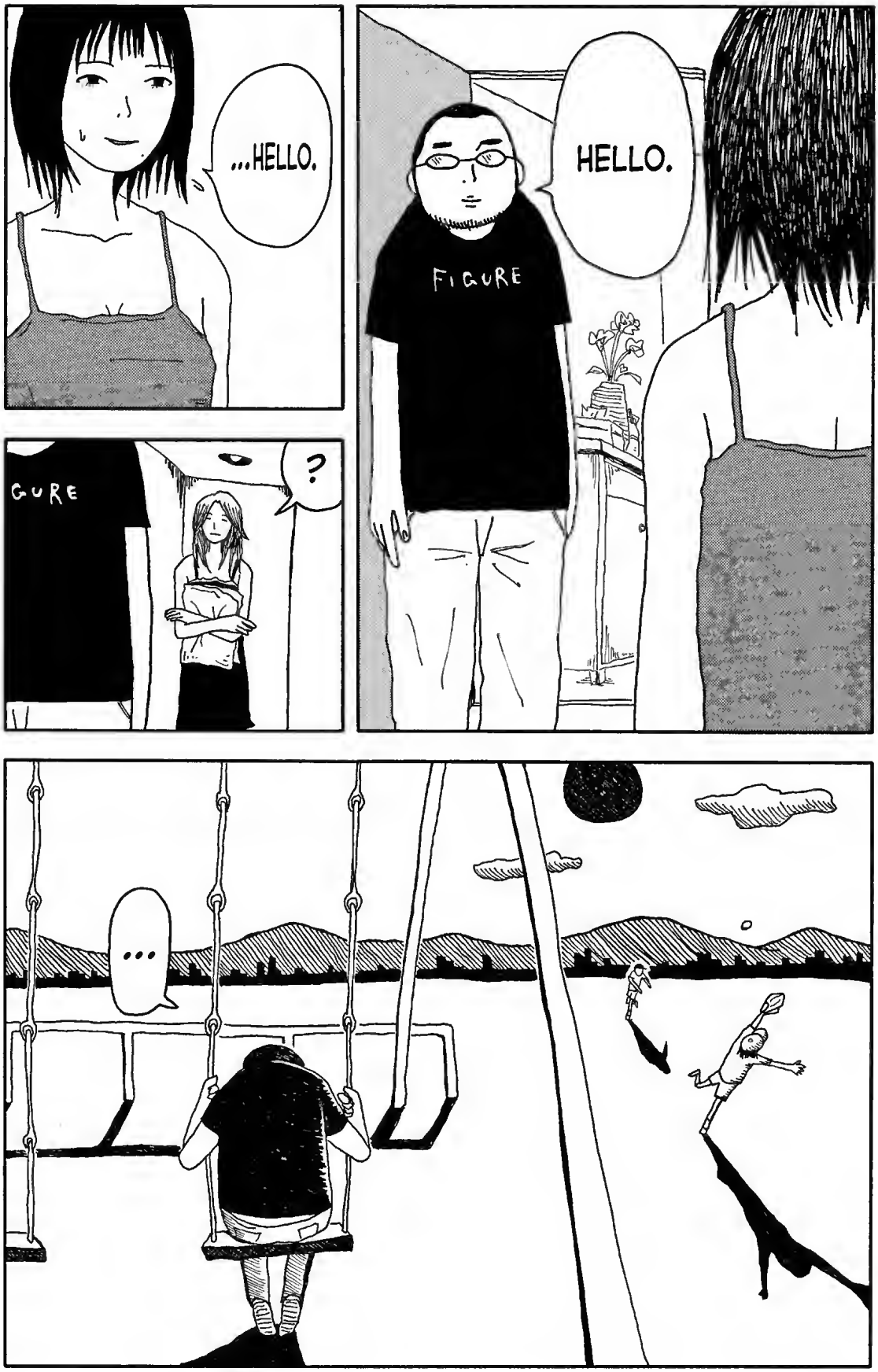
DID YOU PULL AN ALL-NIGHTER?
MANGA ARTISTS WORK ALL NIGHT. IT'S PART OF THE JOB.
OH, WOW. SO YOU REALLY WERE AT IT...
HA HA! YOU'RE SUCH A WEIRDO.
Okay, let's make breakfast.
NWOOP
...
Cuz my scope's just too huge...
I'M NARROWING DOWN MY SUBJECT, IF YOU WANNA KNOW.
FIGURE
Cool
Shiawase Ogawa
Cooking
YOU DONE?

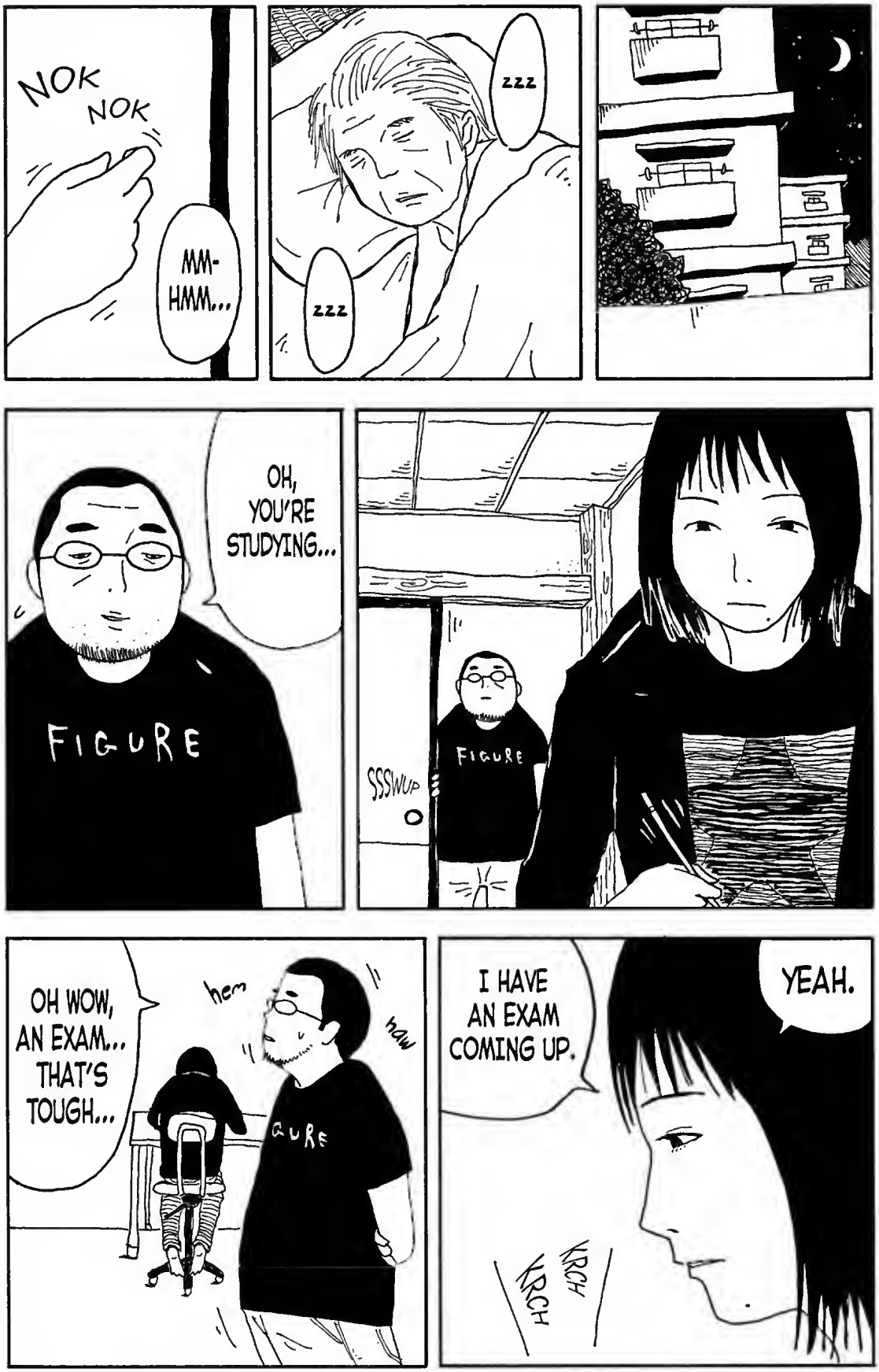
You kidding me? I'm too scared to.
phlap
I have an idea. You want to hear it?
FIGUR
BEER
GIMME A BEER.
Coffee Shop Bambi
Bambi
...
FIGURE
The Weekly Mirrors
BEER
hfff
Flip Flip
Pinup Girls Galor
HALT


Fashion Health
DOM
Advance Payment Only
Full Service
GOOD AFTERNOON, SIR. HOW ARE YOU? ONE CUSTOMER, COMING IN!
HERE YOU GO, SIR. ENJOY.
FIGURE
NO...
DO YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC GIRL IN MIND?
30 min. ¥8,000
dip
FIGURE
NICE TO MEET YOU TOO.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
HI, I'M YUU.

DO YOU HAVE THE DAY OFF TODAY FROM WORK?
HUH? OH, UH... SORT OF.
OOH, YOU'RE LIKE A BABY...
Your physique, I mean.
SO CUTE!
Hey, how am I supposed to come up with good ideas when I've got all this other stuff to release? Let it all out and I'll be good to go!

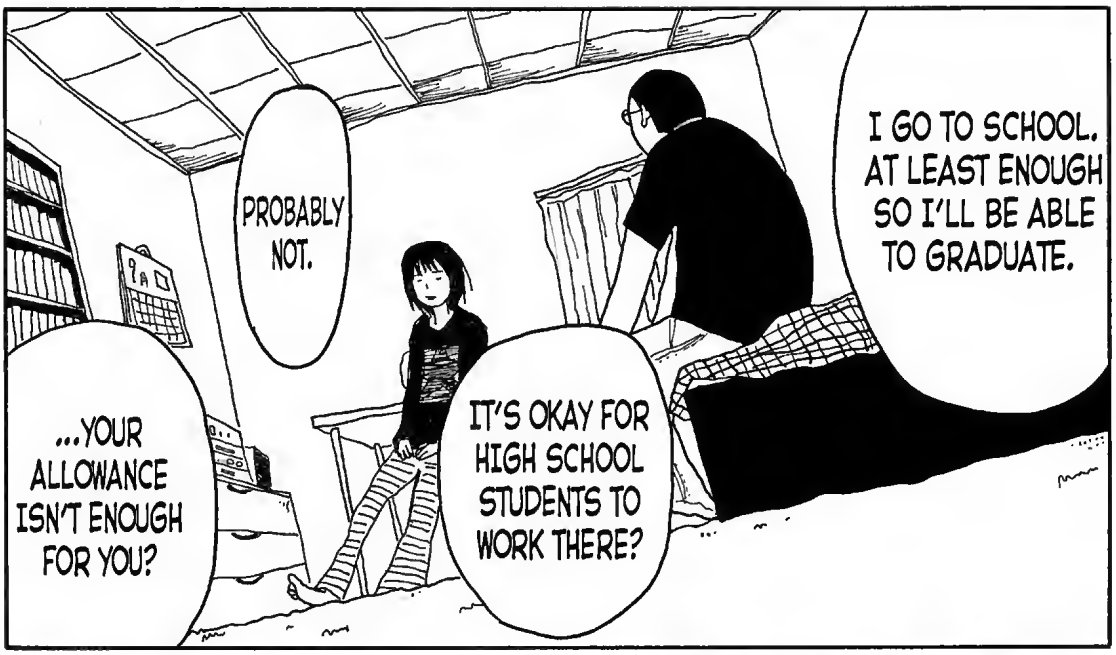

UH...
?
FIGURE
UH, THANK YOU.
FIGURE
KA-CHAK
THANK YOU.
...

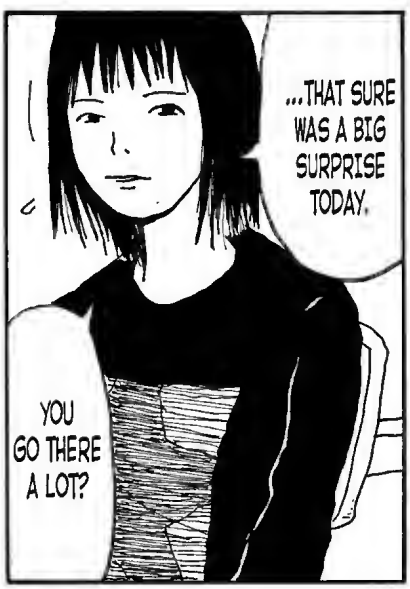

...HELLO.
HELLO.
FIGURE
GURE
?
...


NOK NOK
MM-HMM...
ZZZ
ZZZ
OH, YOU'RE STUDYING...
FIGURE
SSSWUP
FIGURE
OH WOW, AN EXAM... THAT'S TOUGH...
hem
haw
I HAVE AN EXAM COMING UP.
YEAH.
KRCH
KRCH

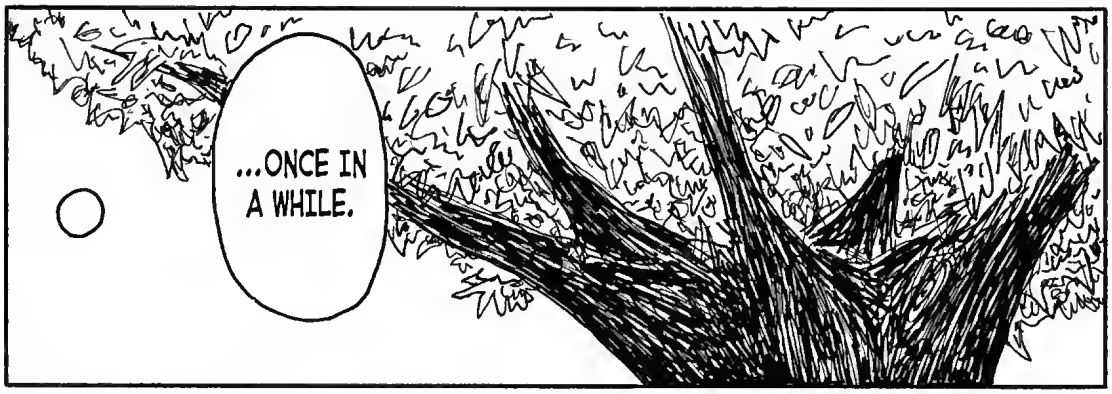
YOU LISTEN TO AIKO? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
Hey!
SHWA
...
glance
glance
Flik
...
...THAT PLACE.
FIGURE
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING THERE?
turn
WHAT?
THUNK

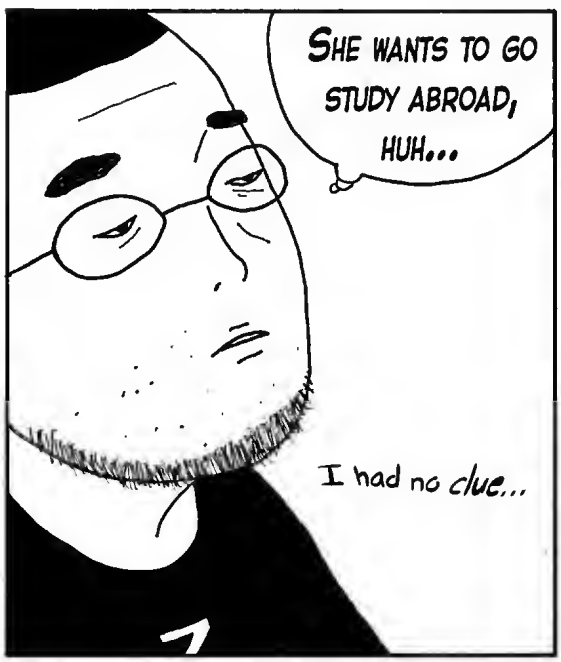
SINCE ABOUT HALF A YEAR AGO...
Cu-ko, 18
...
WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?


I GO TO SCHOOL. AT LEAST ENOUGH SO I'LL BE ABLE TO GRADUATE.
PROBABLY NOT.
IT'S OKAY FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO WORK THERE?
...YOUR ALLOWANCE ISN'T ENOUGH FOR YOU?

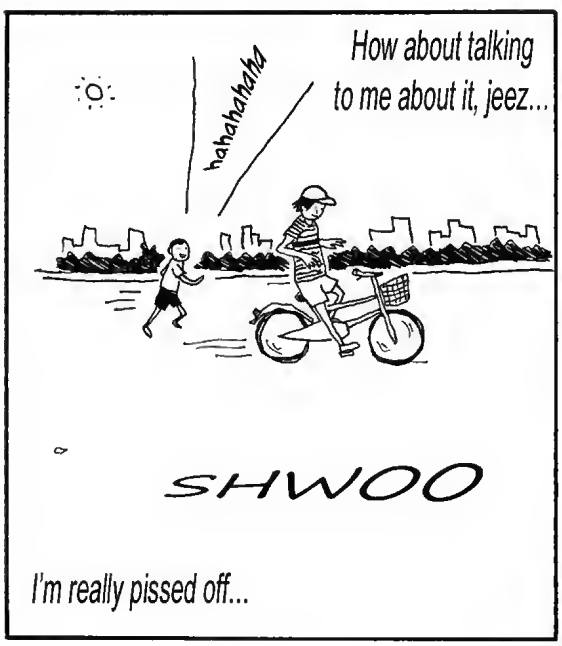

...THAT SURE WAS A BIG SURPRISE TODAY.
YOU GO THERE A LOT?

IT'S ENOUGH.
...I WANT TO GO STUDY ABROAD, SEE.
STUDY ABROAD?


...ONCE IN A WHILE.

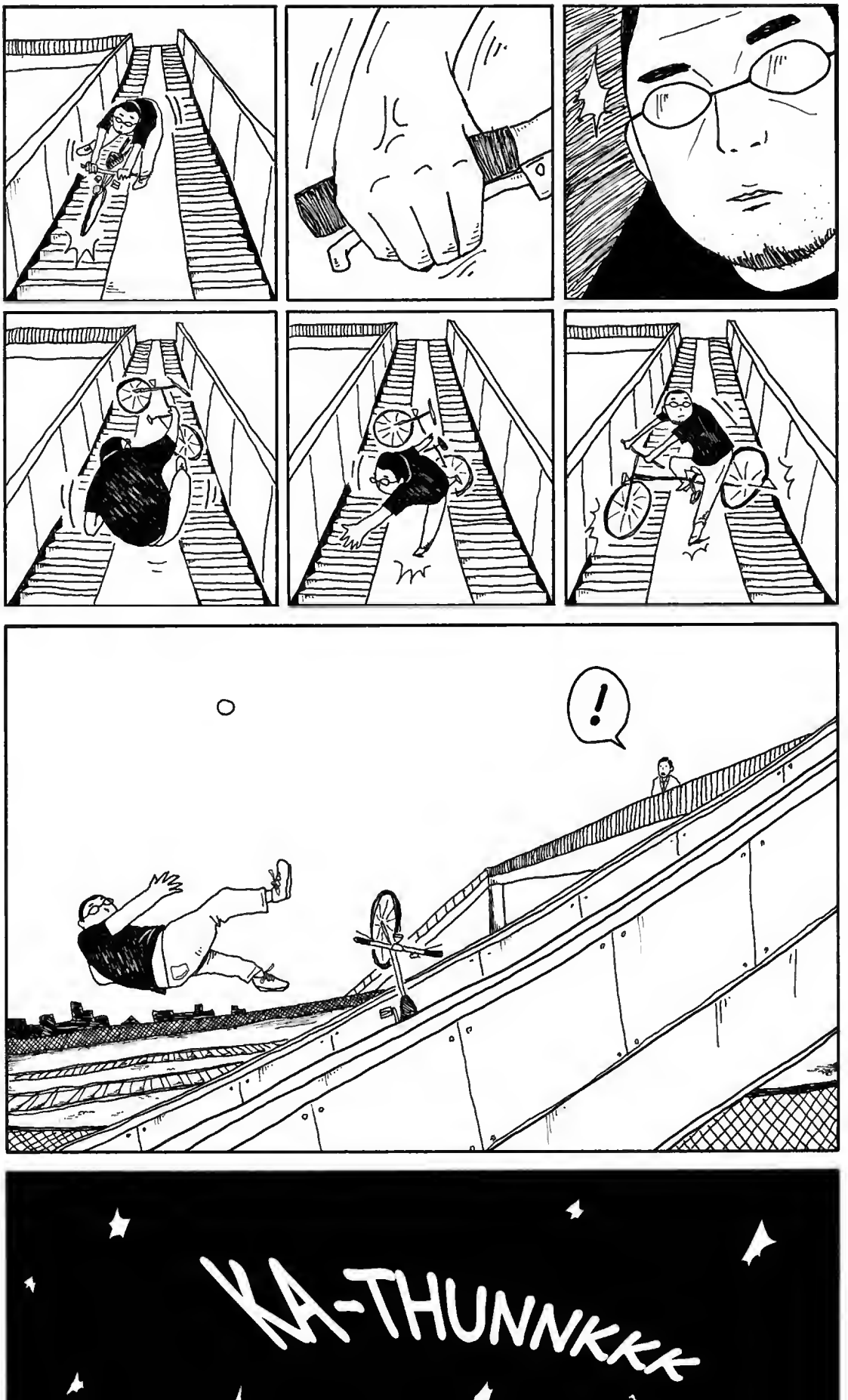

SHE WANTS TO GO STUDY ABROAD, HUH...
I had no clue...

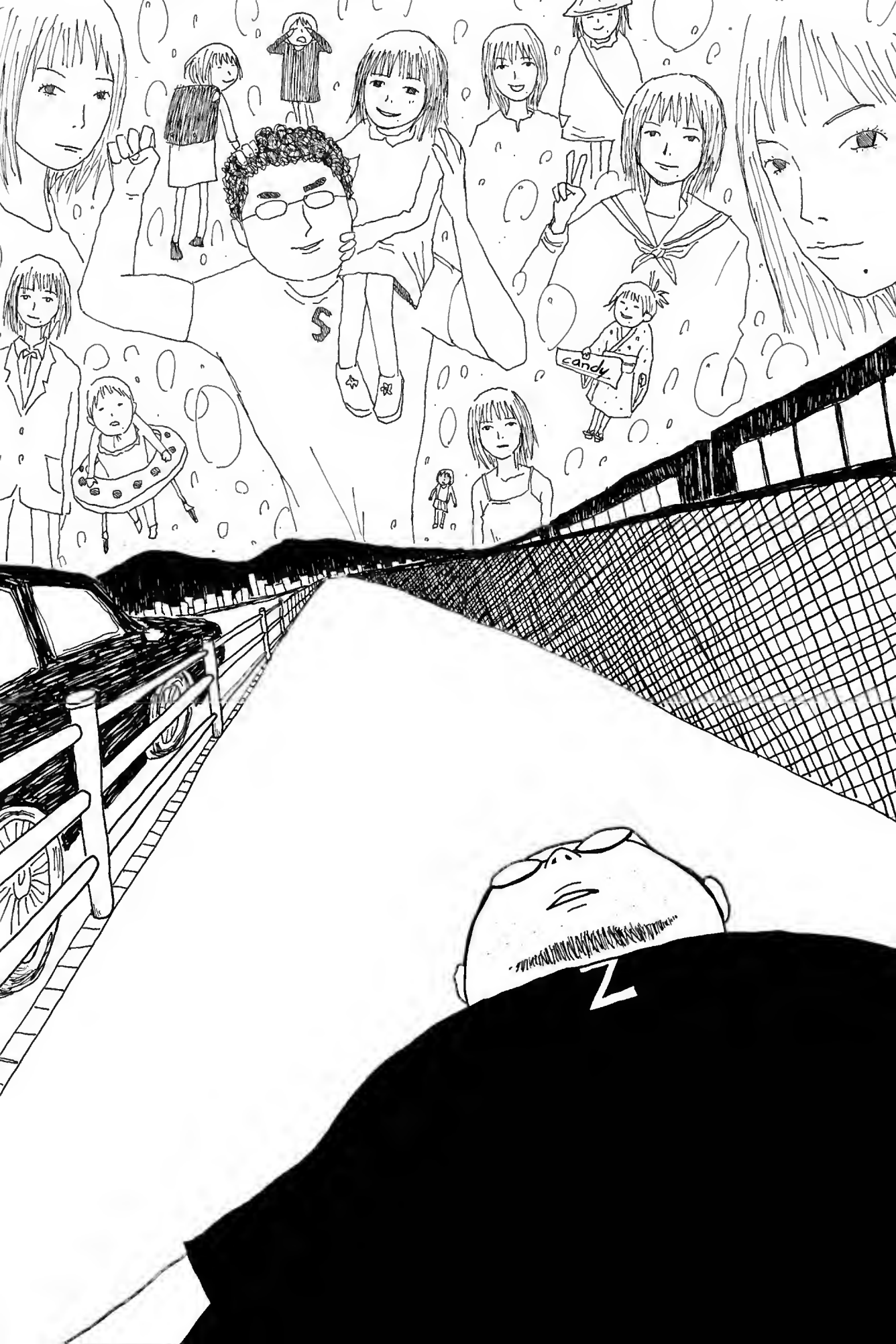
Z


How about talking to me about it, jeez...
hahahahaha
SHWOO
I'm really pissed off...

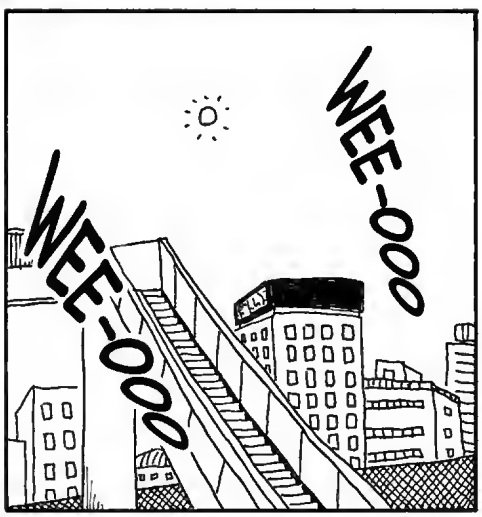
...
WOW! YOU WENT PRETTY FAR THIS TIME.
WHOA!
...at myself.
SKWEE
hmph
YOU'RE GETTING PRETTY GOOD AT IT!
Cool
HE'S AMAZING.
WOW, LOOK AT THAT GUY!
SHWOOO
CA-CHANK

When did I turn into...
SHA
SHA
SHWOO
When did it happen?
...this kinda pathetic loser type of guy?!
KA-TONK
KA-TUNK
TWOK
DAMN IT ALL TO HELLLLL!!
WOPE
SHWOOO


!
KA-THUNNKKK


S
candy
Z

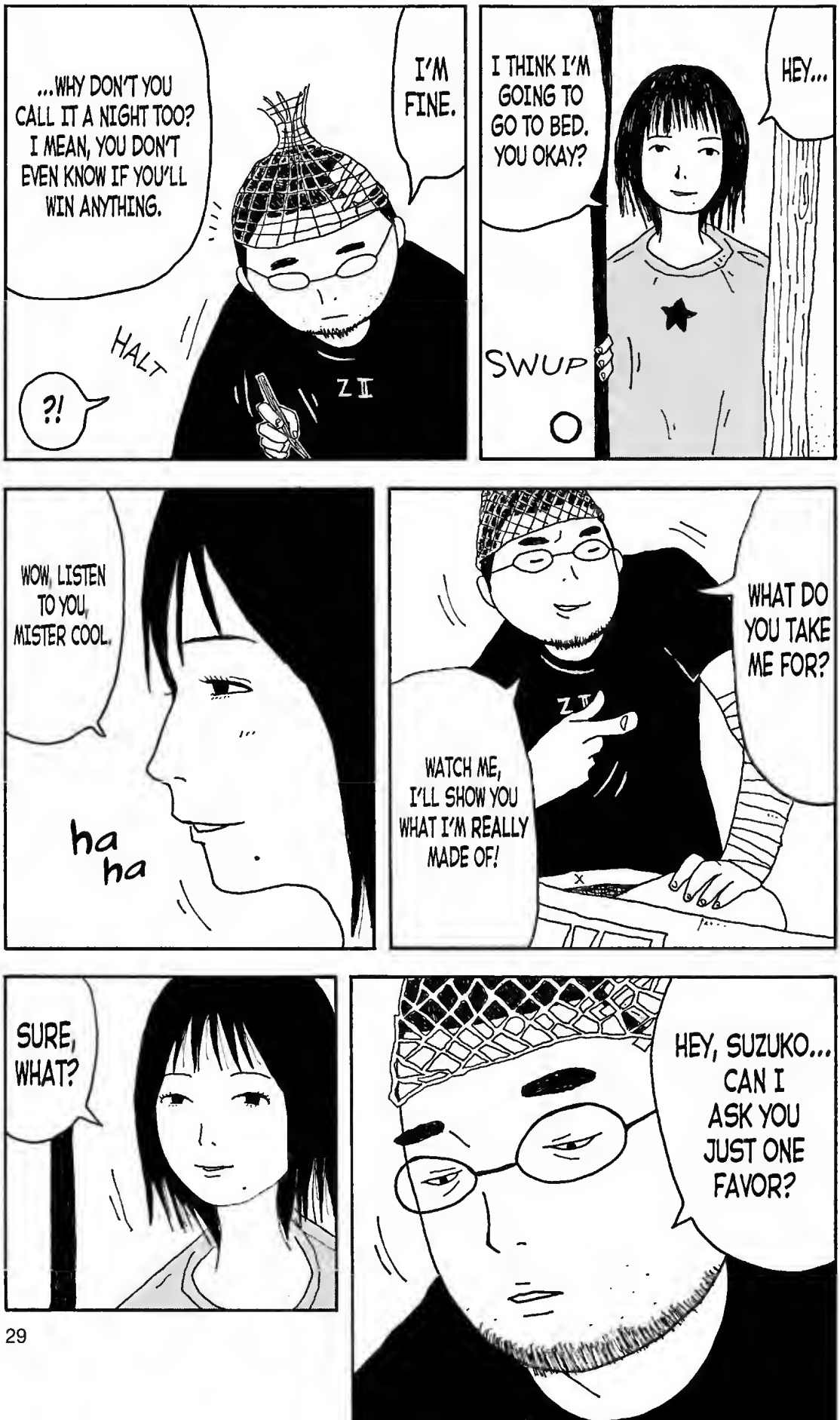
...
Smile
Z

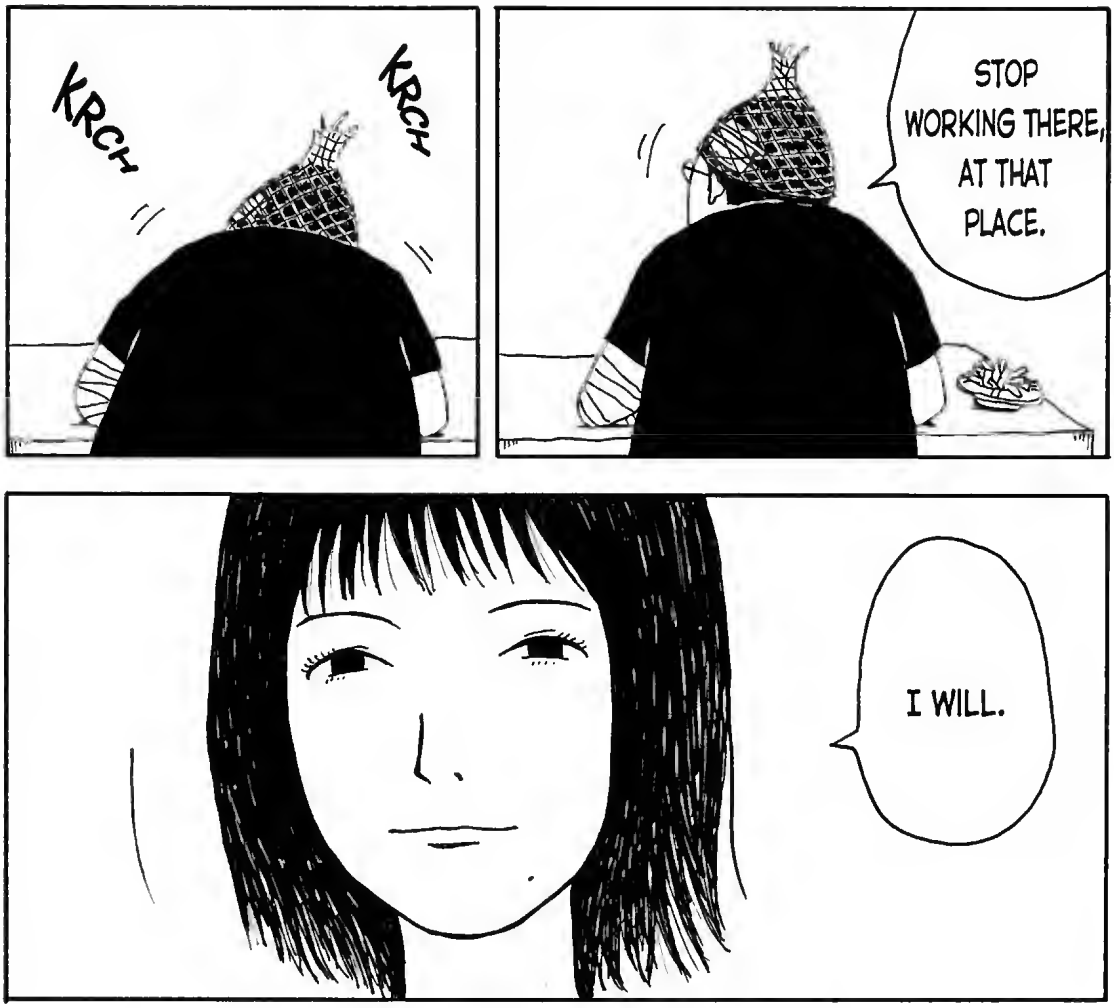

WEE-OOO
WEE-OOO

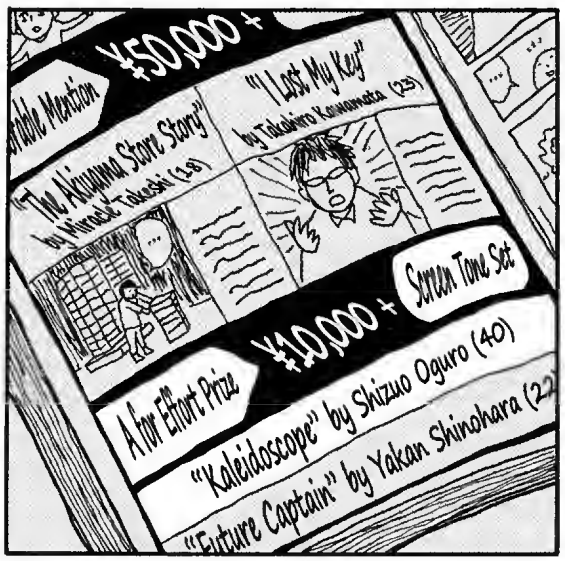
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
Z

YOU TRYING TO MAKE US MISERABLE? IS THAT IT?

...
KRCH
KRCH
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD... DON'T RIDE YOUR BIKE ANYMORE!
Your head looks like some kinda fruit...
YOU DID THIS ON PURPOSE, TO BE A JERK?
...
KRCH
KRCH
Fwap
SNORR
SNORR
KRCH
KRCH
Z II


...WHY DON'T YOU CALL IT A NIGHT TOO? I MEAN, YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IF YOU'LL WIN ANYTHING.
I'M FINE.
HALT
ZII
?!
I THINK I'M GOING TO GO TO BED. YOU OKAY?
HEY...
SWUP
WOW, LISTEN TO YOU, MISTER COOL.
ha ha
WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?
WATCH ME, I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT I'M REALLY MADE OF!
SURE, WHAT?
HEY, SUZUKO... CAN I ASK YOU JUST ONE FAVOR?


KRCH
KRCH
STOP WORKING THERE, AT THAT PLACE.
I WILL.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¥10,000+
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A for Effort Prize
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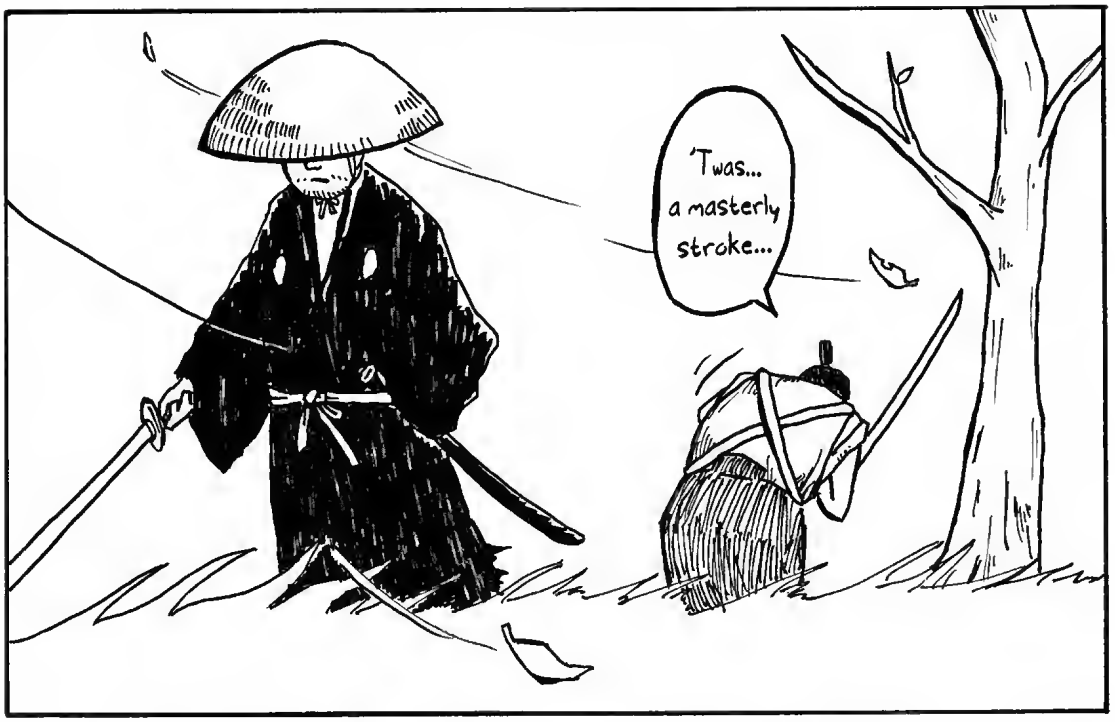
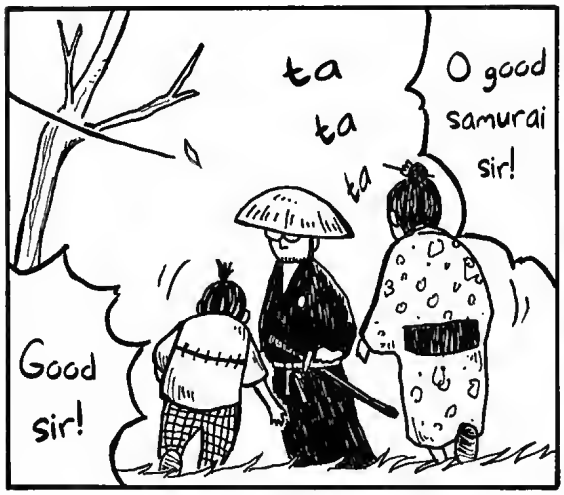
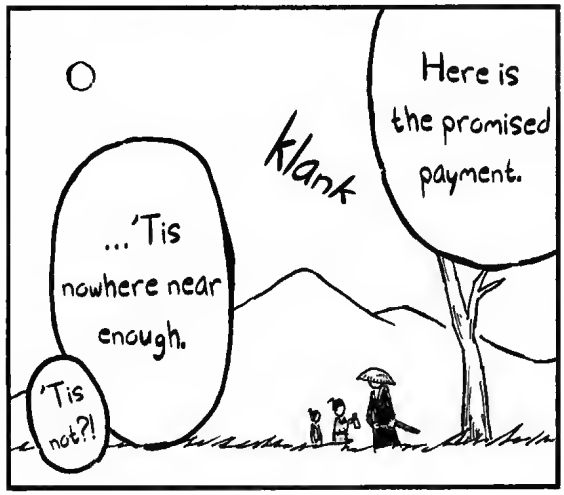
"Future Captain" by Yakan Shinohara (22)

The End

I Just Haven't Gotten Serious Yet, That's All


'Twas... a masterly stroke...


ta
ta
ta
O good samurai sir!
Good sir!

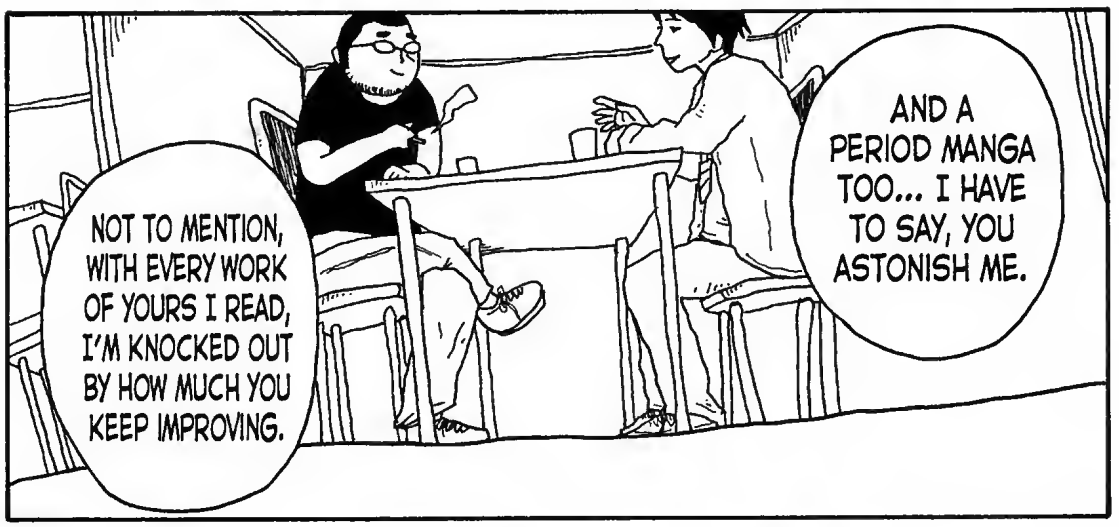

O
klank
Here is the promised payment.
...'Tis nowhere near enough.
'Tis not?!

THUNK

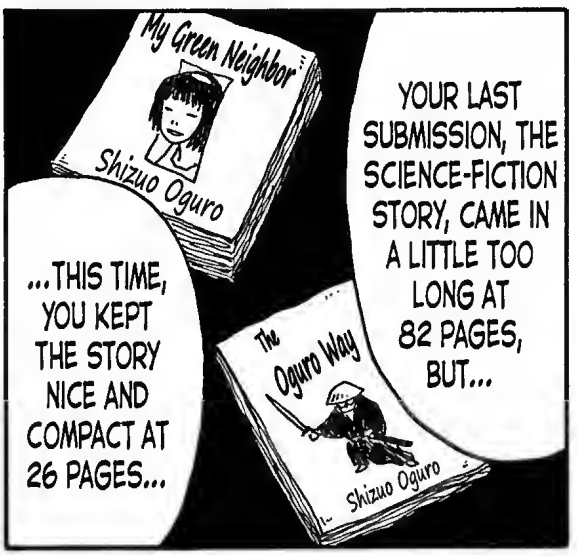
...
Keep well, little ones...
Kind sir...
Use this money to feed your poor ill mother and make her strong again.
O kind samurai sir...
Thank you, sir!
My sword
is for the greater good...
That is the Oguro way.
The End

phlap
phlap
...
EMEN
Sorry to keep you waiting.
TUMP
TUMP
OGURO-SAN.
...
mFFhh
phlap
YES?
What'd you think?
KEMEN

That's right...
WOW... THIS TIME YOU WENT FOR A COOL, HARD-BOILED FEEL.

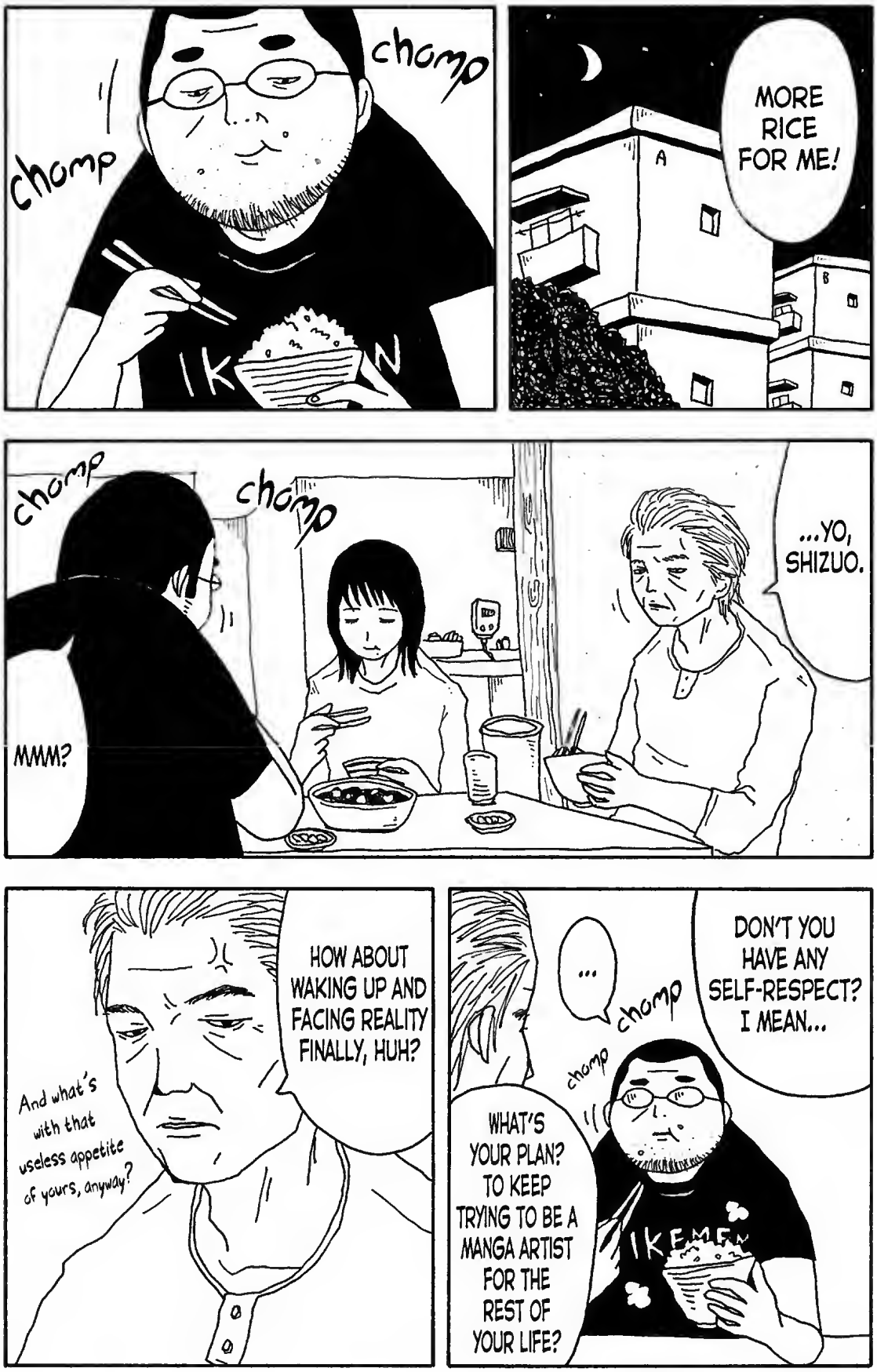

NOT TO MENTION, WITH EVERY WORK OF YOURS I READ, I'M KNOCKED OUT BY HOW MUCH YOU KEEP IMPROVING.
AND A PERIOD MANGA TOO... I HAVE TO SAY, YOU ASTONISH ME.

OH, NO, REALLY...
Keep going!
...AND FRANKLY, I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THAT YOU ONLY STARTED DRAWING MANGA JUST RECENTLY. I MEAN THAT.
IKEMEN


My Green Neighbor
Shizuo Oguro
...THIS TIME, YOU KEPT THE STORY NICE AND COMPACT AT 26 PAGES...
The Oguro Way
Shizuo Oguro
YOUR LAST SUBMISSION, THE SCIENCE-FICTION STORY, CAME IN A LITTLE TOO LONG AT 82 PAGES, BUT...

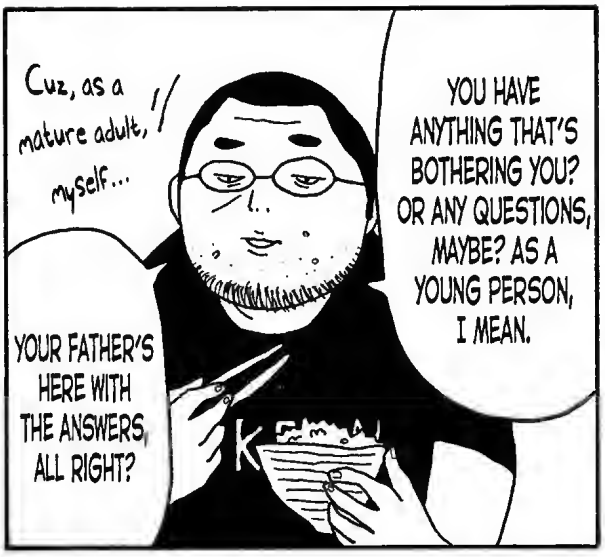
Stupid me!
I KINDA FORGOT ABOUT THAT.
D-OHHH! OF COURSE!
IKEMEN
FOR OUR READERSHIP. WHICH IS YOUNG PEOPLE...
!
...BUT THIS IS JUST A LITTLE TOO COOL AND HARD-BOILED.
Monthly EKKE
YES?
MISTER MURAKAMI...
...THAT WOULD HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON YOUNG READERS.
?!
BUT I DO THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES, OGURO-SAN, TO CREATE SOMETHING...
gah har har har
SHUT THE HELL UP...
You want a message? I'll make it rain messages.
DEFINITELY! LET'S GIVE FULL SCOPE TO YOUR POWERS, OGURO-SAN!!
Sounds great.
OKAY WITH YOU IF I GIVE FREE REIN TO MY POWERS AS A MAN OF THE WORLD?
IKEMEN

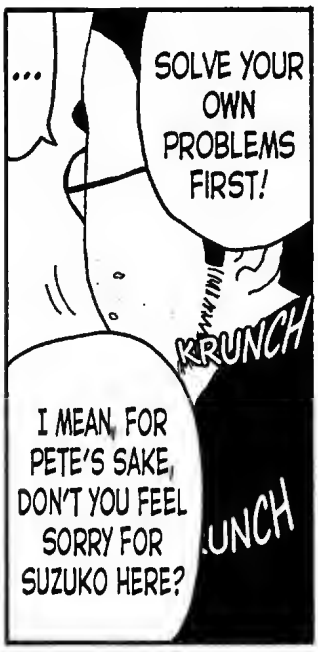
YES, SIR!!
Leave it to me!!
So you can really give full scope to those powers.
NOW STAY IN THAT FRAME OF MIND AND LET'S GIVE OUR ALL TO GETTING YOU PUBLISHED!
Chugakukan
EKKE
Murakami
THANK YOU FOR COMING.
bow
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING!!
IKEMEN
...rejection...
Another...
CHU
GAKU
KAN


chomp
chomp
MORE RICE FOR ME!
chomp
chomp
MMM?
...YO, SHIZUO.
HOW ABOUT WAKING UP AND FACING REALITY FINALLY, HUH?
And what's with that useless appetite of yours, anyway?
...
chomp
chomp
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SELF-RESPECT? I MEAN...
WHAT'S YOUR PLAN? TO KEEP TRYING TO BE A MANGA ARTIST FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?

WHAT?
You ignoring me?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. SUZUKO.

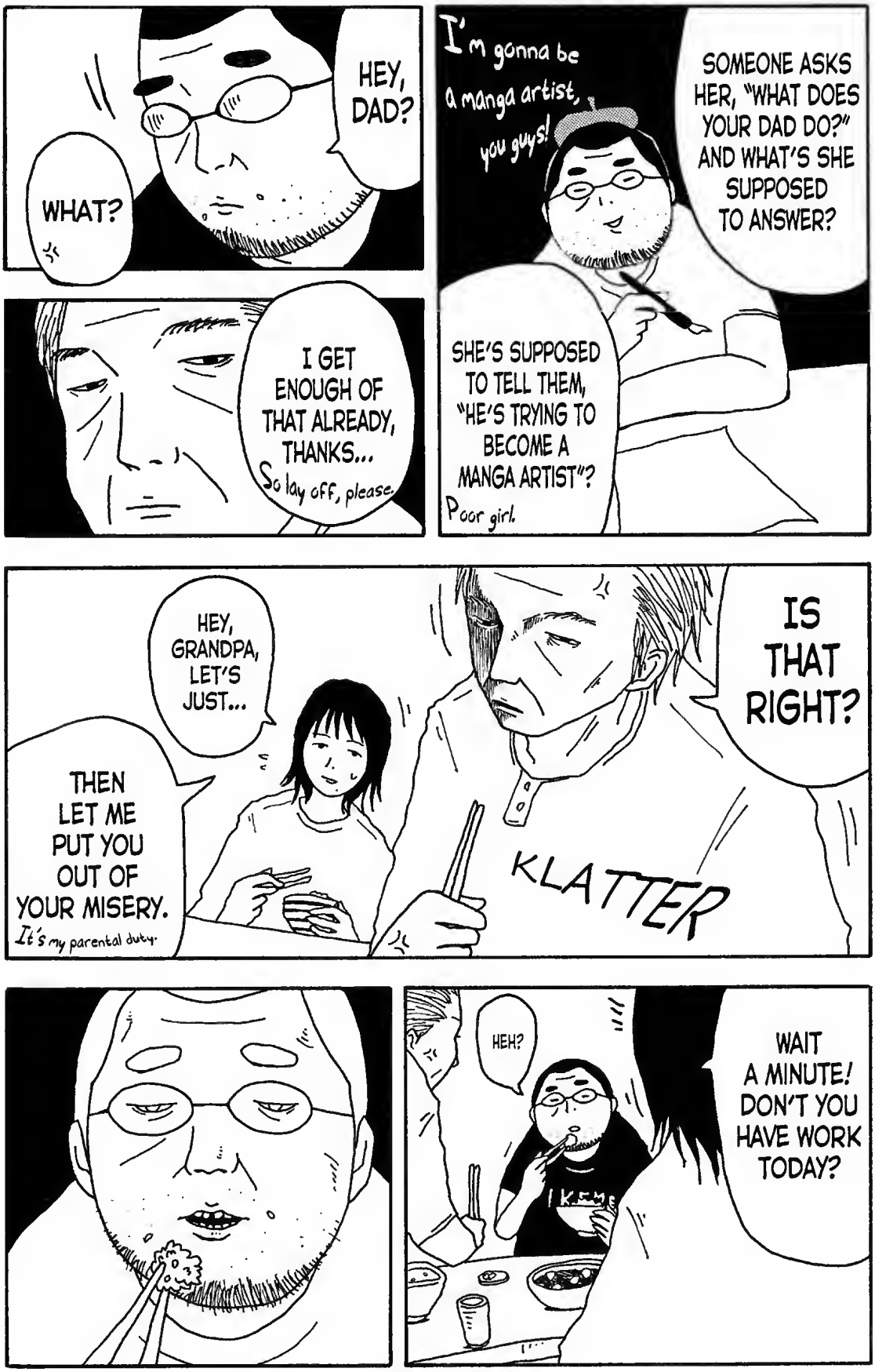
NO, NOT REALLY...


Cuz, as a mature adult, myself...
YOUR FATHER'S HERE WITH THE ANSWERS, ALL RIGHT?
YOU HAVE ANYTHING THAT'S BOTHERING YOU? OR ANY QUESTIONS, MAYBE? AS A YOUNG PERSON, I MEAN.

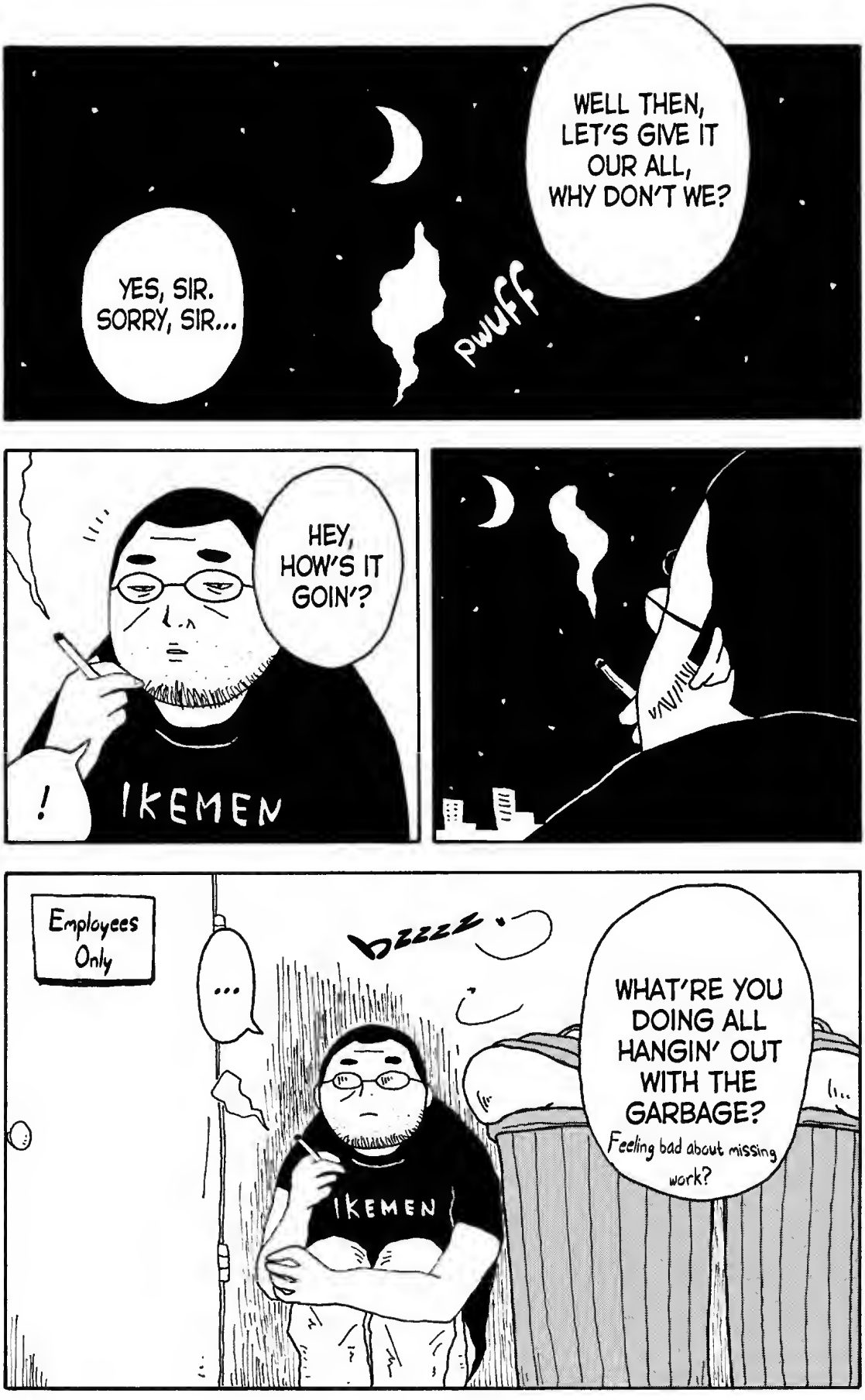

...
SOLVE YOUR OWN PROBLEMS FIRST!
KRUNCH
I MEAN, FOR PETE'S SAKE, DON'T YOU FEEL SORRY FOR SUZUKO HERE?

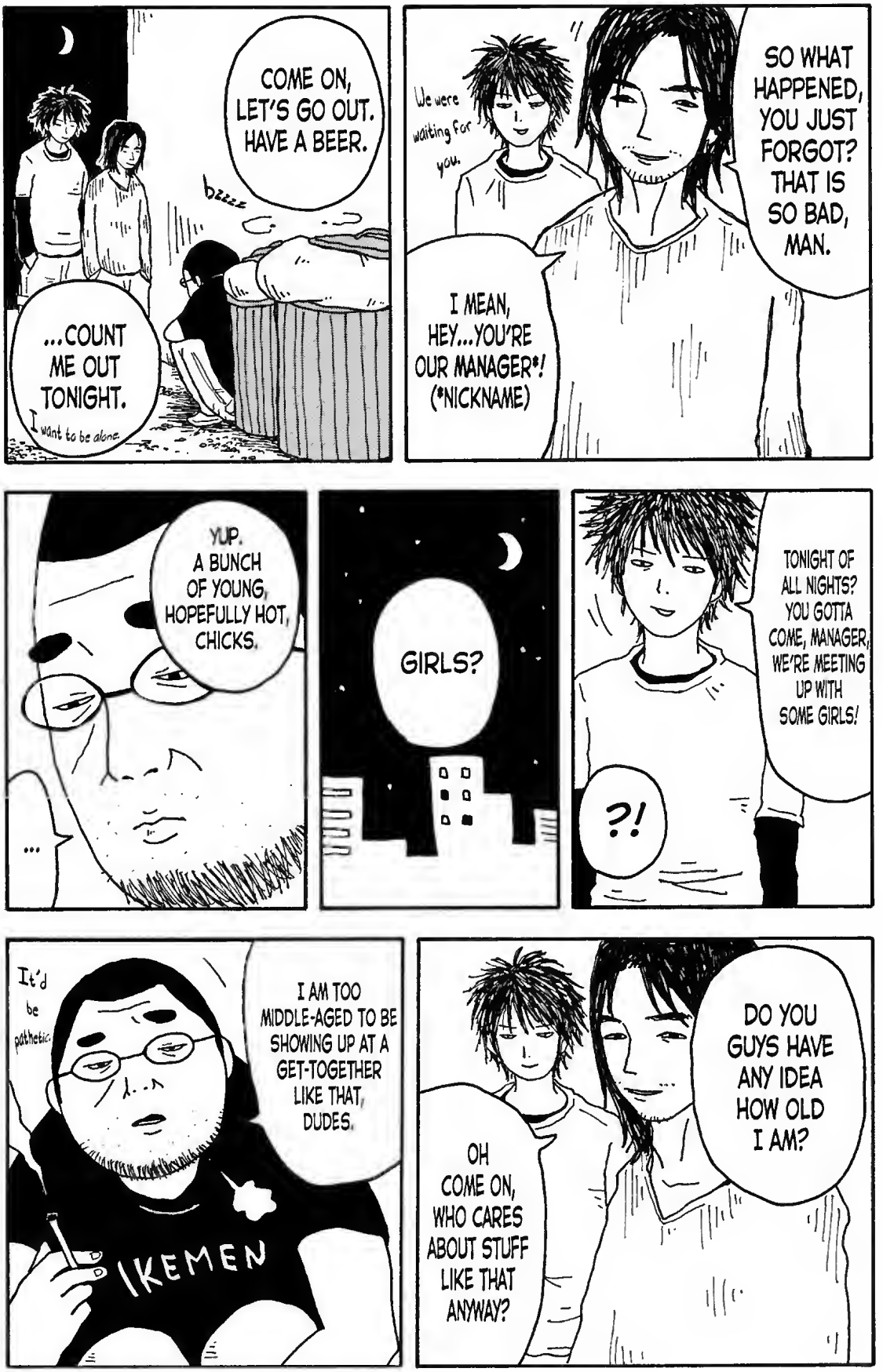
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?
WHAT KIND OF PERSON IN NEED OF HELP WOULD TURN TO SOMEONE WHO'S FLAILING AROUND WITH HIS HEAD UP HIS ASS?

Karin
OH, OKAY...
So you don't...


HEY, DAD?
WHAT?
I'm gonna be a manga artist, you guys!
SOMEONE ASKS HER, "WHAT DOES YOUR DAD DO?" AND WHAT'S SHE SUPPOSED TO ANSWER?
SHE'S SUPPOSED TO TELL THEM, "HE'S TRYING TO BECOME A MANGA ARTIST"?
Poor girl.
I GET ENOUGH OF THAT ALREADY, THANKS...
So lay off, please.
HEY, GRANDPA, LET'S JUST...
IS THAT RIGHT?
THEN LET ME PUT YOU OUT OF YOUR MISERY.
It's my parental duty.
KLATTER
HEH?
WAIT A MINUTE! DON'T YOU HAVE WORK TODAY?

— H —
Burgers
...AROUND NINE O'CLOCK.
...YOU'RE A GROWN-UP, RIGHT? OGURO-SAN.
Sorry, we're closed.
H Burgers
WHAT TIME IS IT?
H Burgers
H
pant
pant
...SO IS IT OKAY TO BE LATE TO WORK?
KRCH KRCH
NO, SIR, IT IS NOT...
YES, I AM.
Age-wise...
pant
pant
KEME
H
KRCH
KRCH
Manage
Akiyar
H
Wanna quit?
OKAY, SO YOU'RE JUST NOT THAT INTO THIS JOB?
Manager
NO, I AM.
I'm totally into it.

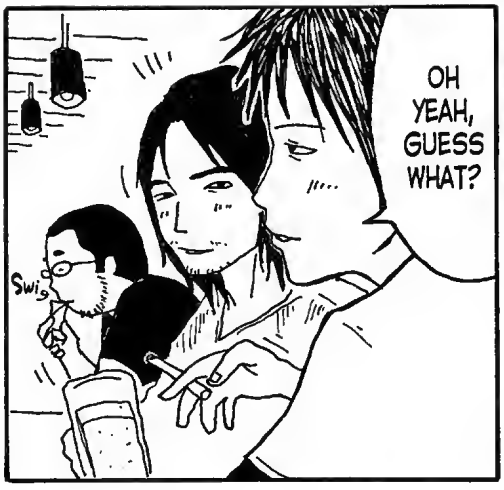

WELL THEN, LET'S GIVE IT OUR ALL, WHY DON'T WE?
YES, SIR. SORRY, SIR...
pwuff
HEY, HOW'S IT GOIN'?
!
IKEMEN
Employees Only
...
bzzzz
WHAT'RE YOU DOING ALL HANGIN' OUT WITH THE GARBAGE?
Feeling bad about missing work?
IKEMEN

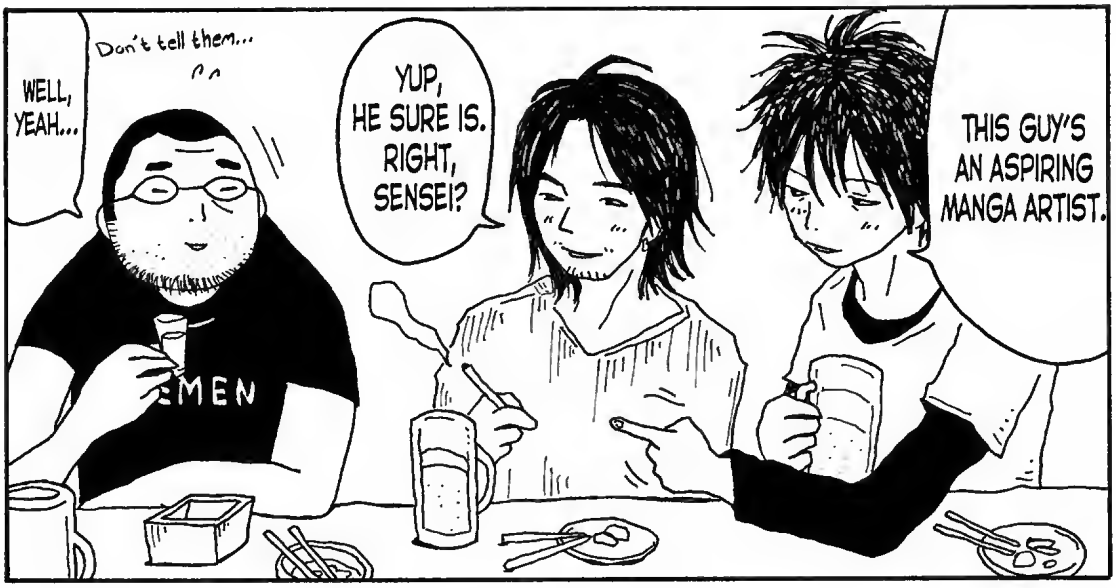

COME ON, LET'S GO OUT. HAVE A BEER.
bzzz
...COUNT ME OUT TONIGHT.
I want to be alone.
We were waiting for you.
SO WHAT HAPPENED, YOU JUST FORGOT? THAT IS SO BAD, MAN.
I MEAN, HEY...YOU'RE OUR MANAGER*! (*NICKNAME)
YUP. A BUNCH OF YOUNG, HOPEFULLY HOT, CHICKS.
...
GIRLS?
TONIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS? YOU GOTTA COME, MANAGER, WE'RE MEETING UP WITH SOME GIRLS!
?!
It'd be pathetic.
I AM TOO MIDDLE-AGED TO BE SHOWING UP AT A GET-TOGETHER LIKE THAT, DUDES.
IKEMEN
OH COME ON, WHO CARES ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT ANYWAY?
DO YOU GUYS HAVE ANY IDEA HOW OLD I AM?

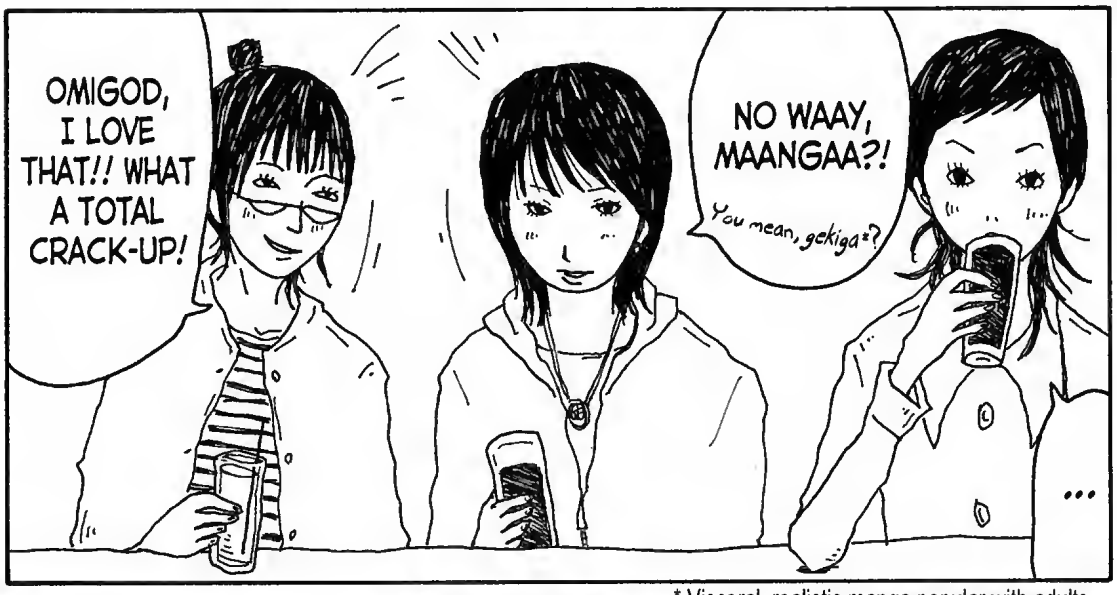
IKEMEN
TO THE MIRACLE OF FATE THAT BROUGHT US TOGETHER TONIGHT!

Tavern
Kuniwake
Try our famous Satoko's Kappa-maki
yak
yak
laff
laff

CHEEEERS!!

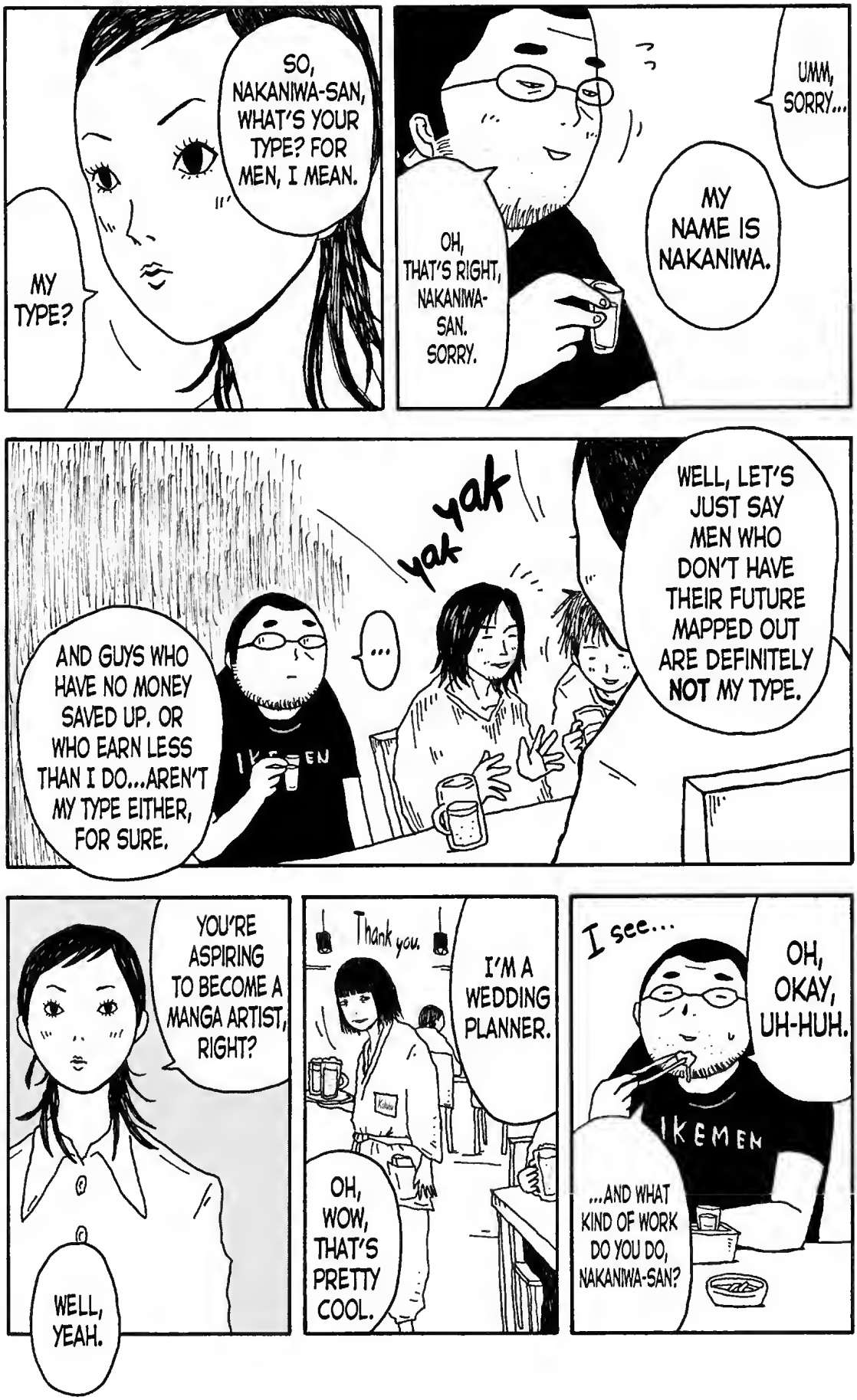

OH YEAH, GUESS WHAT?





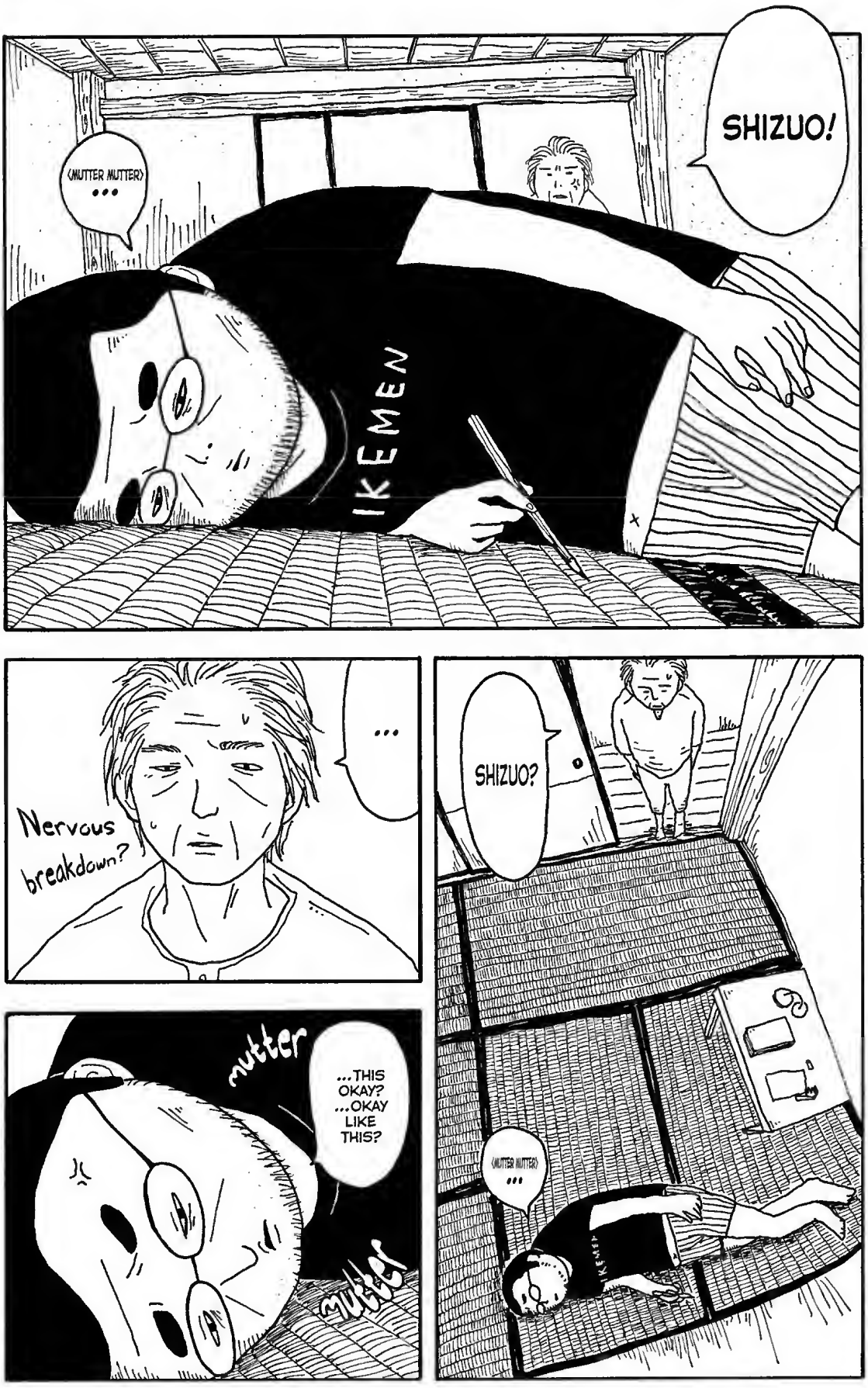
* Visceral, realistic manga popular with adults.

OH, THIS?
IT'S KONOWATA*.
*Salted sea cucumber guts.
SO HEY, SENSEI, NOT TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT, BUT WHAT'S THAT STUFF YOU'RE EATING?
?
IKEMEN
nyuk nyuk
WHAT IS THAT, THOUGH? IS IT EVEN EDIBLE?
I KNOW, LOOK AT IT- YUCK!
...
STAAARE
...
ha ha ha ha
...
hfff
KEMEN
...

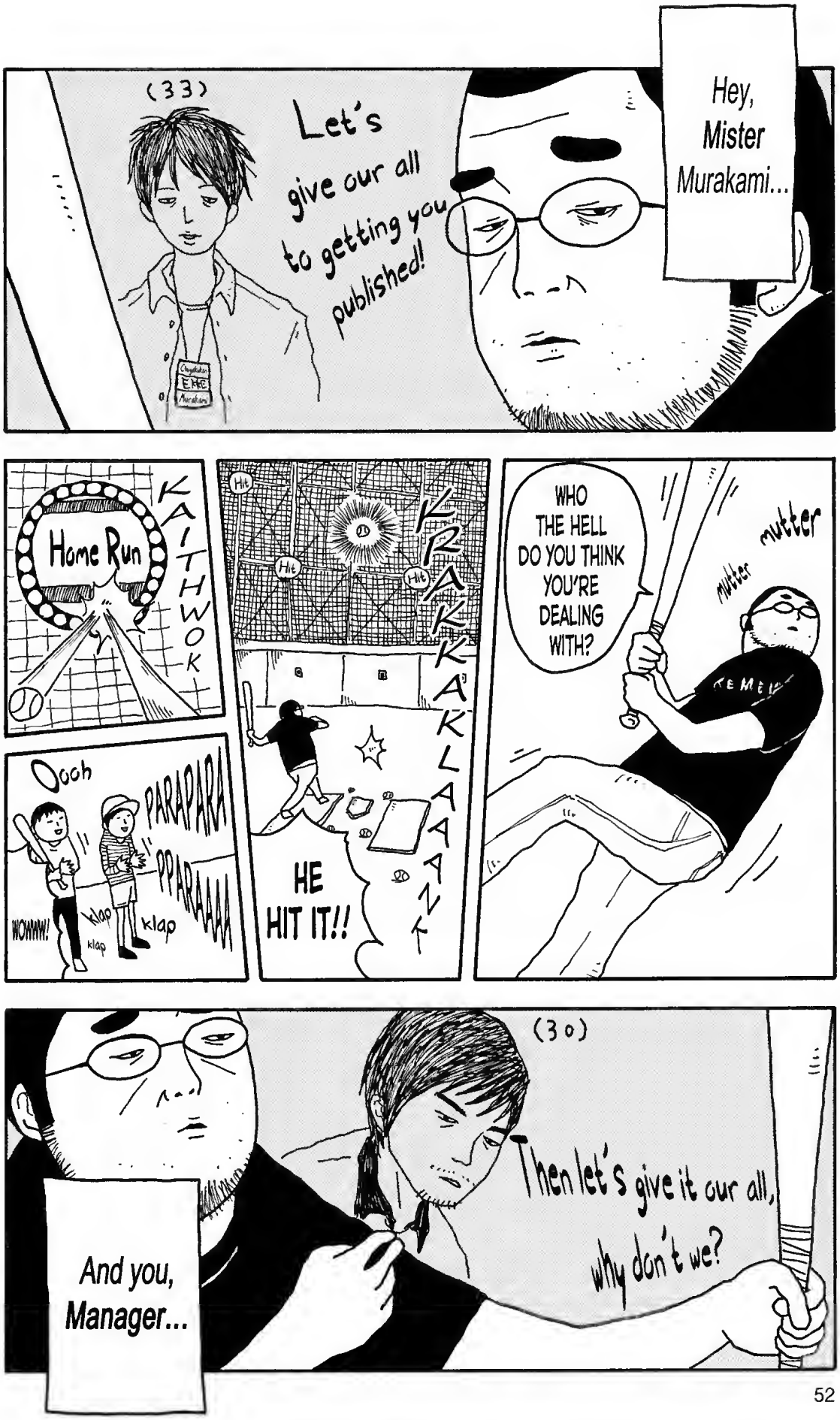

SO, NAKANIWA-SAN, WHAT'S YOUR TYPE? FOR MEN, I MEAN.
MY TYPE?
UMM, SORRY...
MY NAME IS NAKANIWA.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT, NAKANIWA-SAN. SORRY.
WELL, LET'S JUST SAY MEN WHO DON'T HAVE THEIR FUTURE MAPPED OUT ARE DEFINITELY **NOT** MY TYPE.
yak
yak
...
AND GUYS WHO HAVE NO MONEY SAVED UP. OR WHO EARN LESS THAN I DO...AREN'T MY TYPE EITHER, FOR SURE.
YOU'RE ASPIRING TO BECOME A MANGA ARTIST, RIGHT?
WELL, YEAH.
Thank you.
I'M A WEDDING PLANNER.
OH, WOW, THAT'S PRETTY COOL.
I see...
OH, OKAY, UH-HUH.
IKEMEN
...AND WHAT KIND OF WORK DO YOU DO, NAKANIWA-SAN?

YOU PROBABLY NEED TO WORK HARDER AT IT. REALLY GIVE IT YOUR ALL.
Man...
...
Yeah?
Do I ever wanna go home...
yak
yak
laff
laff
MEN

nod
...
Hey!
YOU AWAKE?
cock-a-doodle-doo
YOU CAME HOME LATE LAST NIGHT. OUT ON THE TOWN?
PARTYING, AT YOUR AGE... WHAT THE HELL IS WITH YOU?
YOU'RE SETTING A FINE EXAMPLE FOR YOUR DAUGHTER, YOU KNOW THAT?
You there!
HEY!
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
NOT TO MENTION, I DON'T SEE ANY FRESH MANGA HERE, MISTER ARTIST.
YOU THINK THE WORLD'S YOUR OYSTER, IS THAT IT?


SHIZUO!
(MUTTER MUTTER)
...
IKEMEN
...
Nervous breakdown?
SHIZUO?
(MUTTER MUTTER)
...
mutter
...THIS OKAY? ...OKAY LIKE THIS?
mutter

150 km
130 km
pwosh
Batting Center
pwosh
<MUTTER MUTTER>
...
IKEHIM
YEAH, I SEE HIM. DON'T GO NEAR HIM, BOYS.
pwosh
WE WON'T...
SIGN IN HERE
He's talking to himself, and...
GUESS WHAT, THAT GUY OVER THERE...
In the 150km booth.
HE'S JUST STANDING THERE, NOT TAKING A SINGLE SWING.
HEY, LOOK! HE RAISED HIS BAT!
Swup
Over the hill. All washed up...
...Forty-one years old.
pwosh

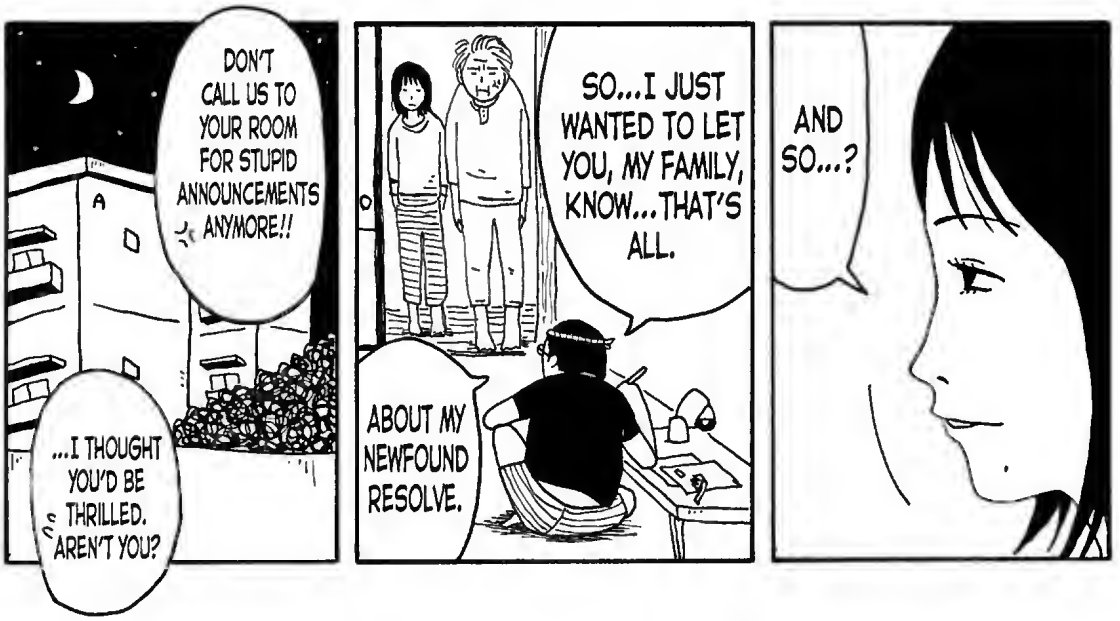

(33)
Let's give our all to getting you published!
Hey, Mister Murakami...
Home Run
KAITHWOK
Hit
Hit
Hit
KRAKAKLAAAANT
HE HIT IT!!
Oooh
PARAPARA
PPARAAAA
WOHHH!
klap
klap
klap
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DEALING WITH?
mutter
mutter
mutter
(30)
Then let's give it our all, why don't we?
And you, Manager...

KRAKKLAAAANK
WHAT DO THEY TAKE ME FOR?
mutter mutter
ALL OF THEM... EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM...
mutter mutter
FWOOSH
And you...
What a total crack-up!
(23)
(22)
No waay, maangaa?!
Is that even edible?
(25)
(25)
Sense!
You young people...
Little Miss Thing!!
(23)
You probably need to work harder at it. Really give it your all.

All right with you...
(41)
...if I get really serious?

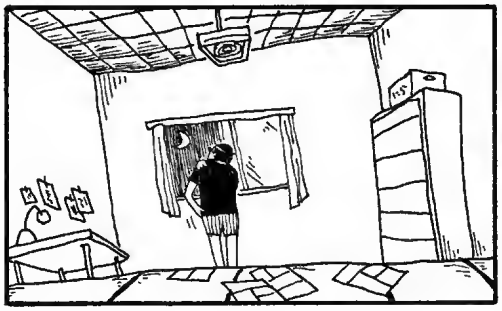
SO THERE IT IS. I DECIDED...
MEFUN
...TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT THIS.

A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT, AIN'T IT?!
You think life's a joke?
AND ANYWAY, JUST DO IT - DON'T TELL US ABOUT IT!
HA HA!

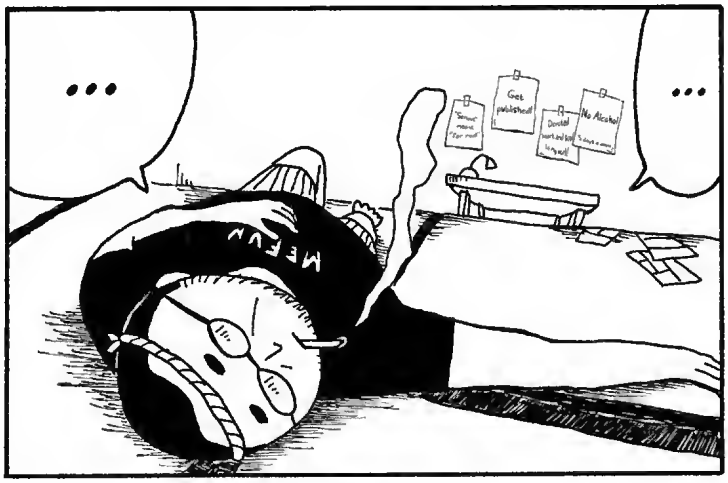

DON'T CALL US TO YOUR ROOM FOR STUPID ANNOUNCEMENTS ANYMORE!!
...I THOUGHT YOU'D BE THRILLED. AREN'T YOU?
SO...I JUST WANTED TO LET YOU, MY FAMILY, KNOW...THAT'S ALL.
ABOUT MY NEWFOUND RESOLVE.
AND SO...?

"Serious" means "for real"
Get published!
Devoted heart and soul to my work!
No Alcohol
5 days a week
KRCH
KRCH

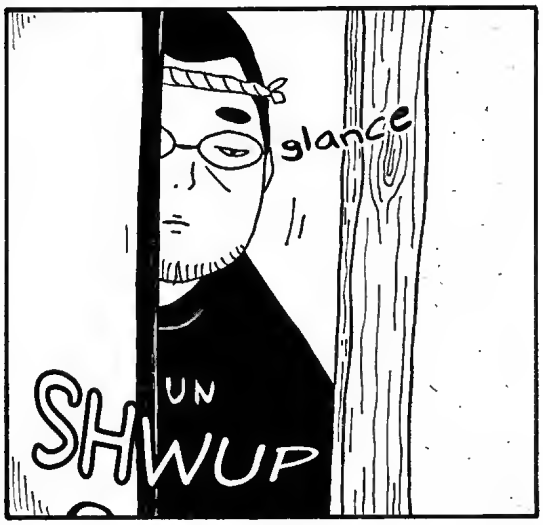
KRCH
KRCH
MEFUN



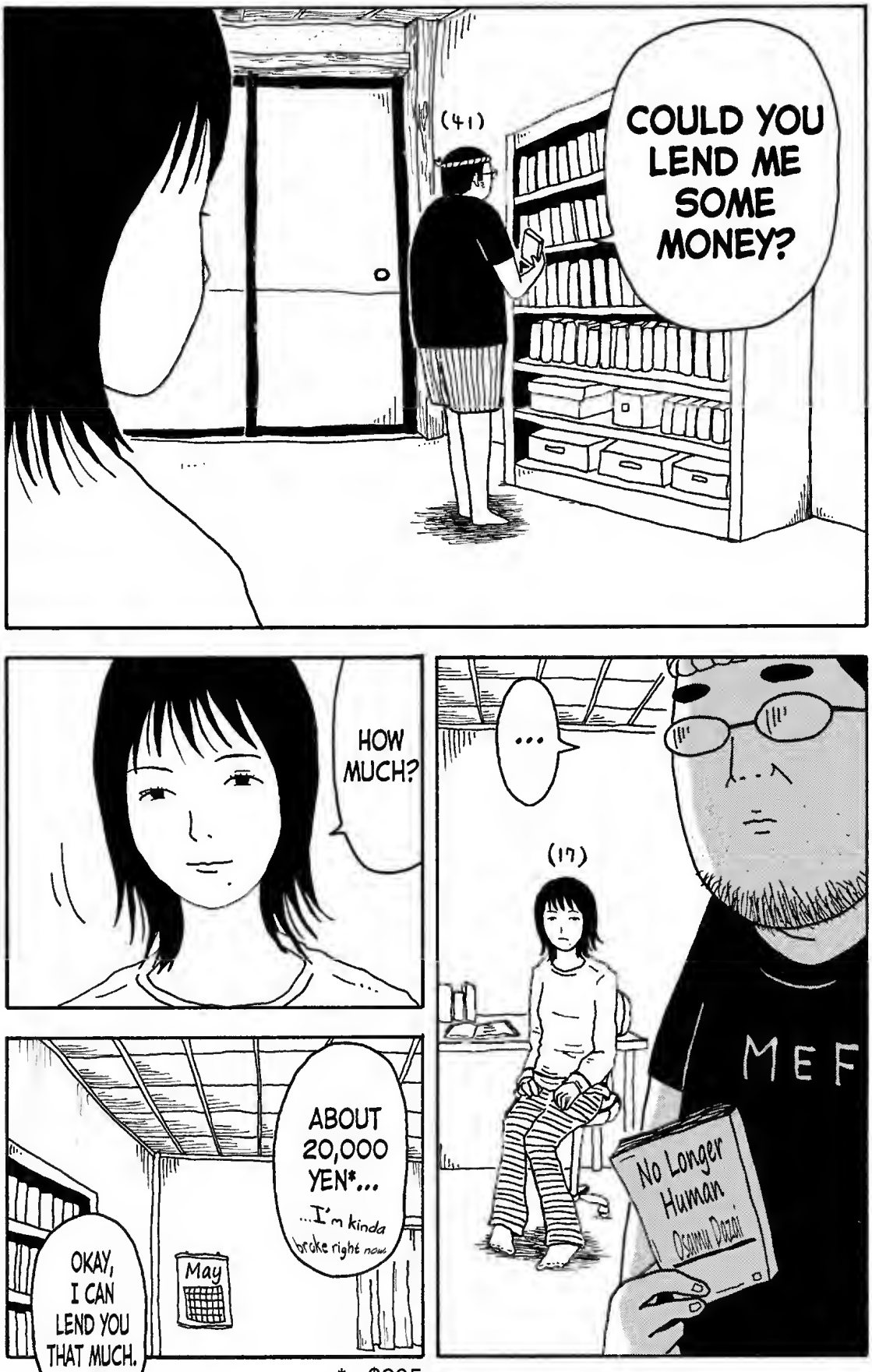
NWUP
...


...
...
MEFUN

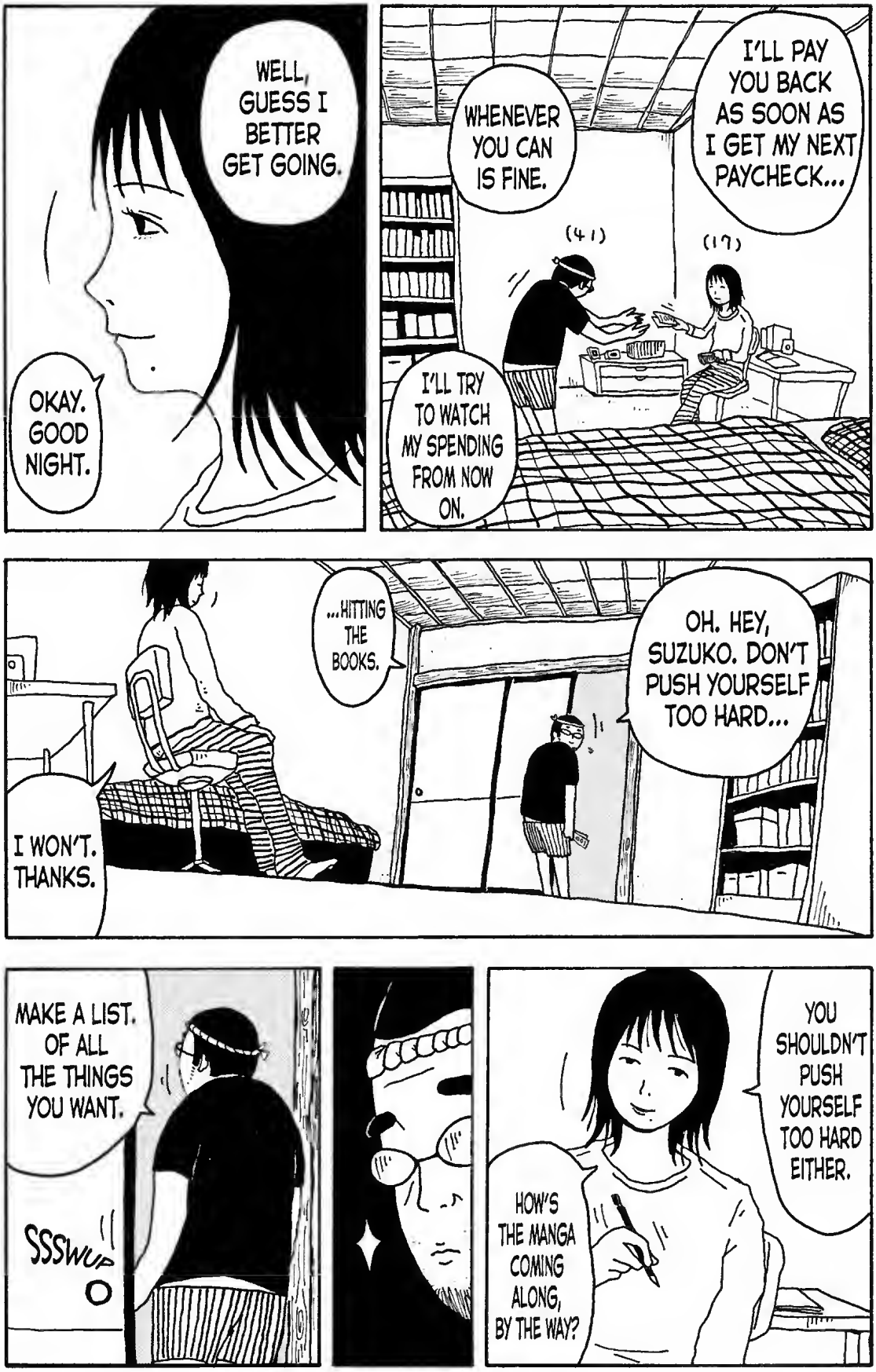
...
snorr
snorr


glance
UN
SHWUP

MM... MORE OR LESS.
ARE YOU TAKING A BREAK?
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU WHEN YOU'RE STUDYING.
SWIP
IT'S OKAY...
Oh-ho
No Longer Human Osamu Dazai
HEY! YOU READ DAZAI? I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
Shwa
Thank you, come again.
IT'S FUN.
I get to read a lot.
YOU SAVING UP THE MONEY YOU EARN?
Book
Book
...SO UH, ANYWAY. HOW'S SCHOOL LATELY? EVERYTHING FINE?
YEAH. EVERYTHING'S FINE.
THAT'S GOOD... AND HOW'S YOUR NEW AFTER-SCHOOL JOB WORKING OUT?
UH-HUH.
Mm-hm
GOOD GIRL.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. SUZUKO...
HM?


(41)
COULD YOU LEND ME SOME MONEY?
HOW MUCH?
...
(17)
MEF
No Longer Human
Osamu Dazai
ABOUT 20,000 YEN*...
...I'm kinda broke right now.
May
OKAY, I CAN LEND YOU THAT MUCH.

* ~$205


WELL, GUESS I BETTER GET GOING.
OKAY. GOOD NIGHT.
WHENEVER YOU CAN IS FINE.
I'LL PAY YOU BACK AS SOON AS I GET MY NEXT PAYCHECK...
(41)
(17)
I'LL TRY TO WATCH MY SPENDING FROM NOW ON.
...HITTING THE BOOKS.
OH. HEY, SUZUKO. DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD...
I WON'T. THANKS.
MAKE A LIST. OF ALL THE THINGS YOU WANT.
SSSWUP
O
YOU SHOULDN'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO HARD EITHER.
HOW'S THE MANGA COMING ALONG, BY THE WAY?

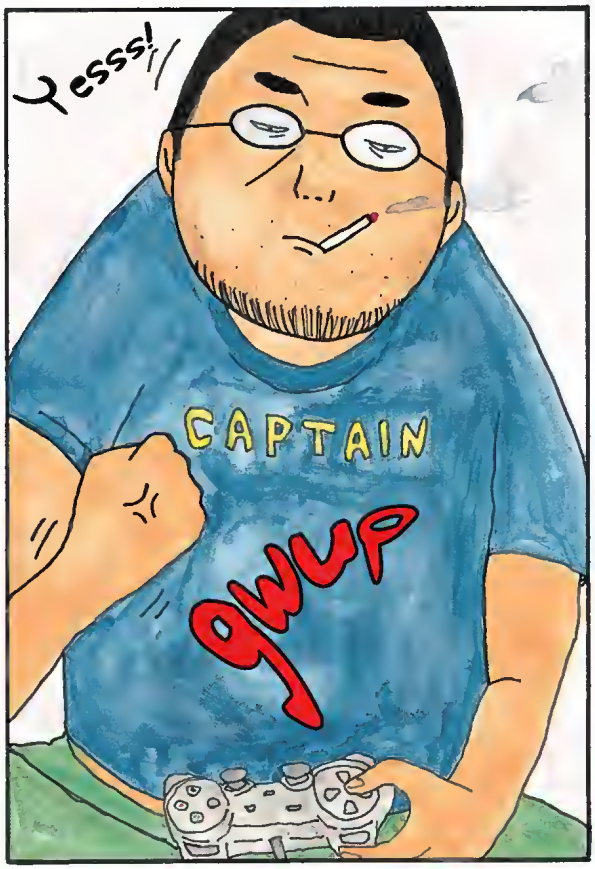
I'll give it all I got.

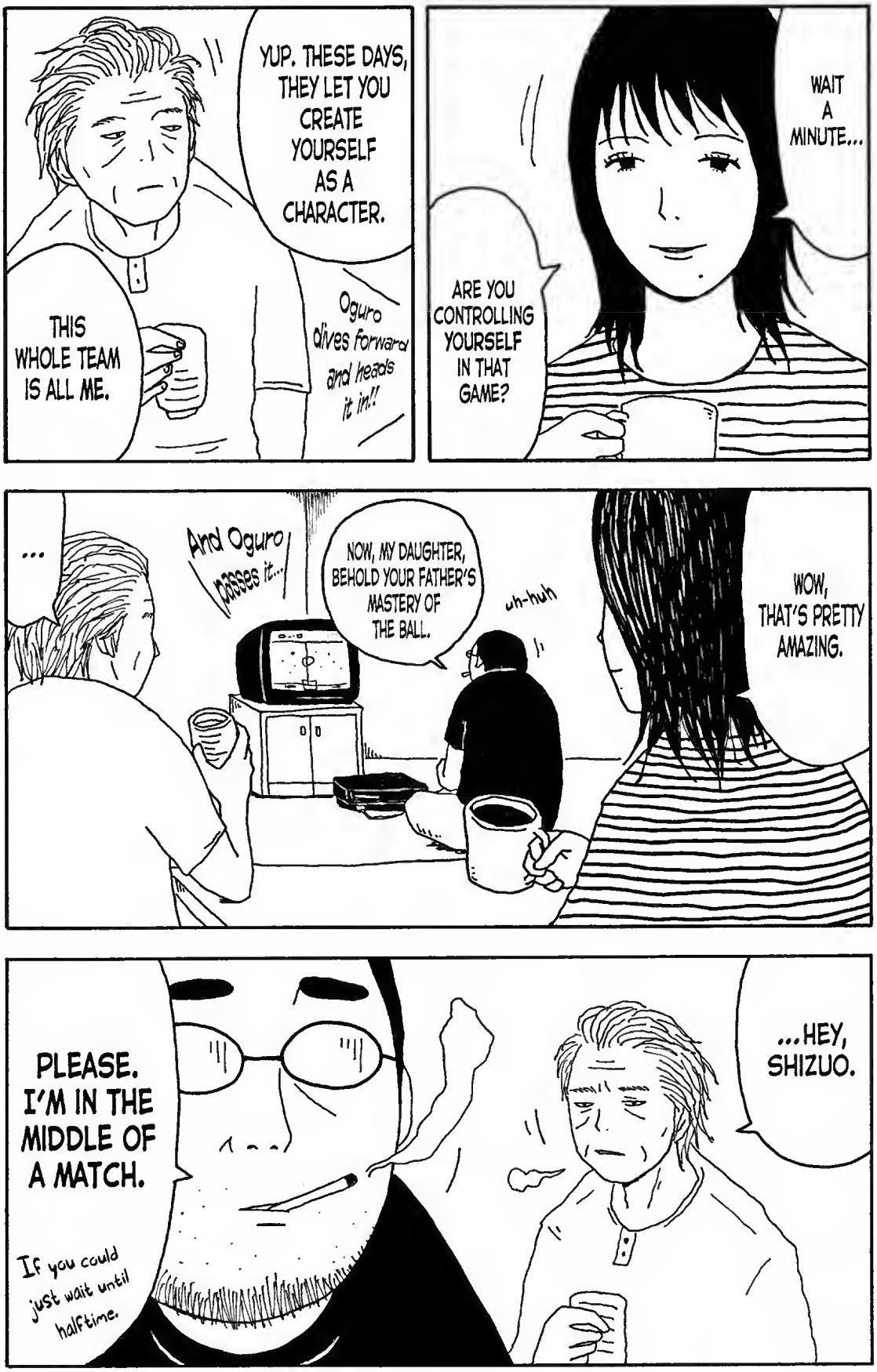
The End

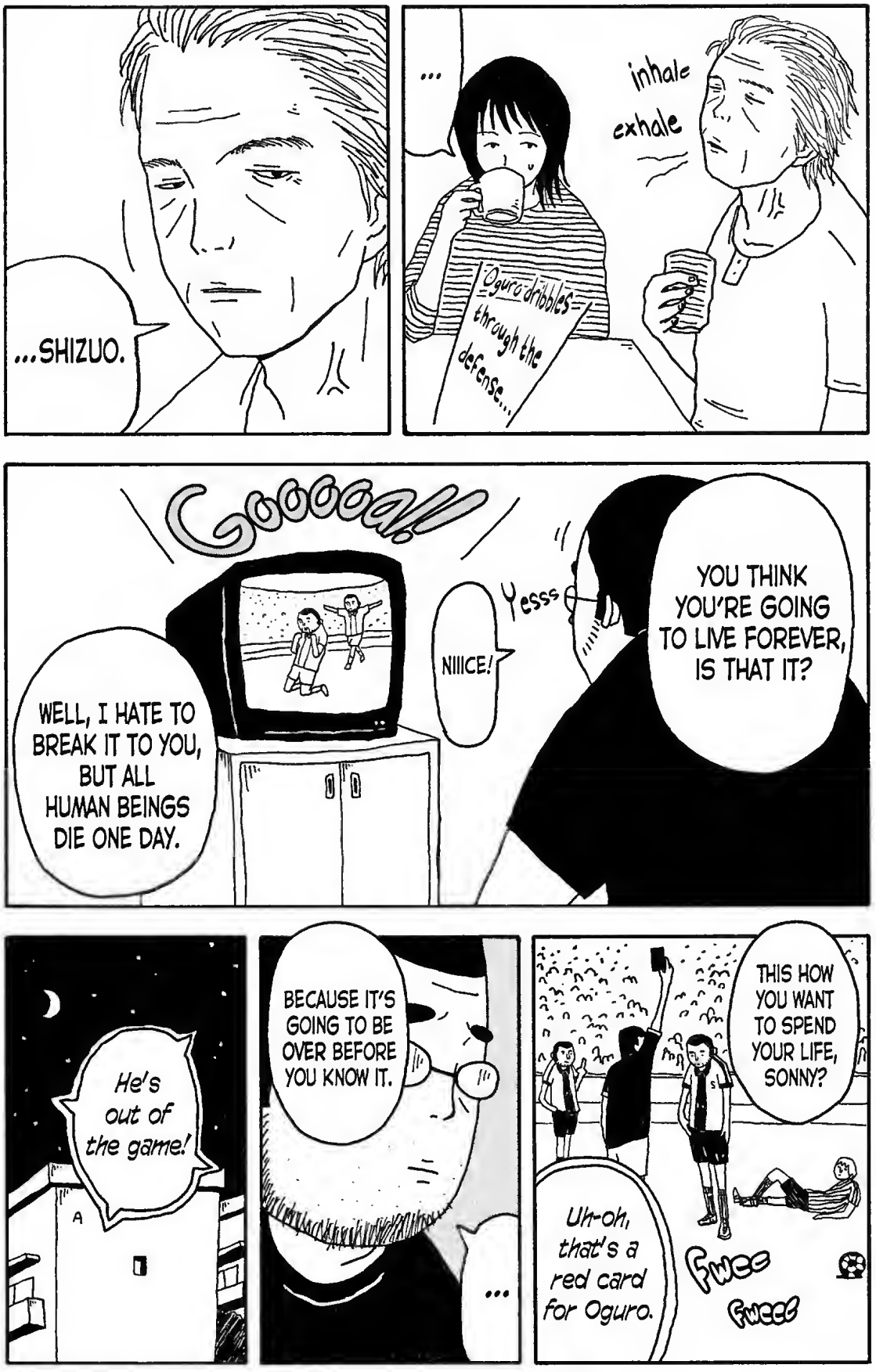
Chapter 1:
O Time, Stop Thy Relentless March!

GOOOOOOAL!!!
Yeah!
Yeah!

And that makes it a hat trick for Oguro.
CAPTAIN
KLIK KLIK KLIK
Yeahh
Yeahh


Yesss!
CAPTAIN
gwup


YUP. THESE DAYS, THEY LET YOU CREATE YOURSELF AS A CHARACTER.
THIS WHOLE TEAM IS ALL ME.
Oguro dives forward and heads it in!!
WAIT A MINUTE...
ARE YOU CONTROLLING YOURSELF IN THAT GAME?
...
And Oguro misses it...
NOW, MY DAUGHTER, BEHOLD YOUR FATHER'S MASTERY OF THE BALL.
uh-huh
WOW, THAT'S PRETTY AMAZING.
PLEASE. I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A MATCH.
If you could just wait until halftime.
...HEY, SHIZUO.

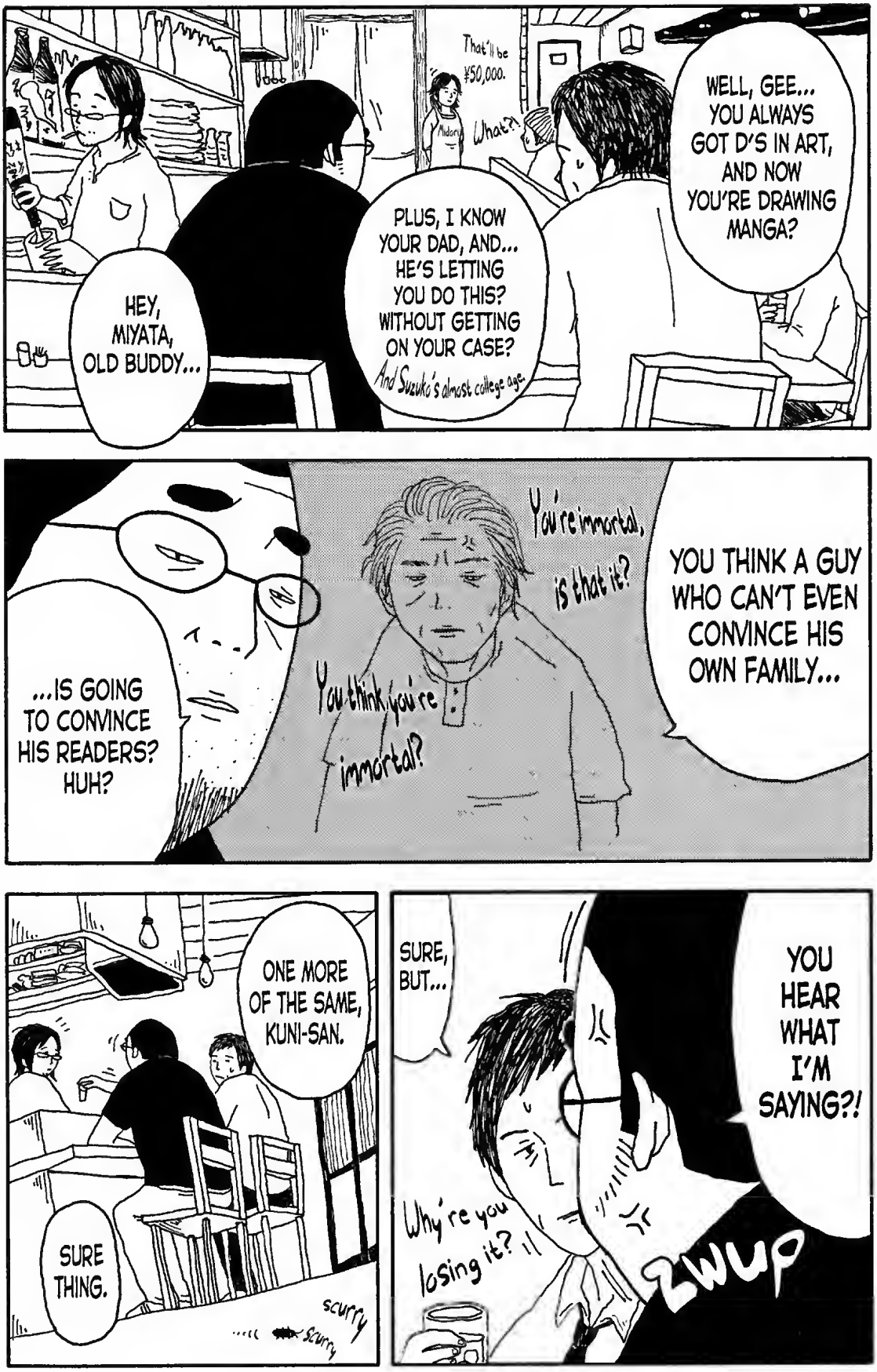

...SHIZUO.
...
inhale
exhale
Oguro dribbles through the defense...
Goooooal!
Yesss
NIIICE!
YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE FOREVER, IS THAT IT?
WELL, I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, BUT ALL HUMAN BEINGS DIE ONE DAY.
He's out of the game!
BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO BE OVER BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.
...
THIS HOW YOU WANT TO SPEND YOUR LIFE, SONNY?
Uh-oh, that's a red card for Oguro.
Fwee
Fweee

Charcoal Grill Hiro
WHAT?!
Hiro

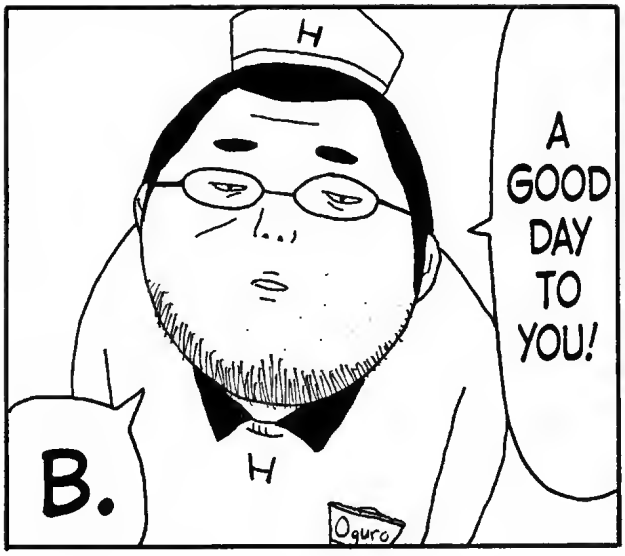
YOU MEAN... YOU ACTUALLY ARE DRAWING MANGA, FOR REAL...
So it wasn't just a big joke...

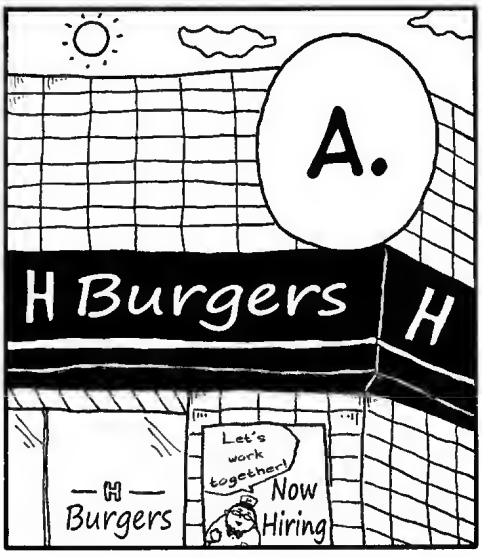
...ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
Shwzz
WHAT'S THAT MEAN?

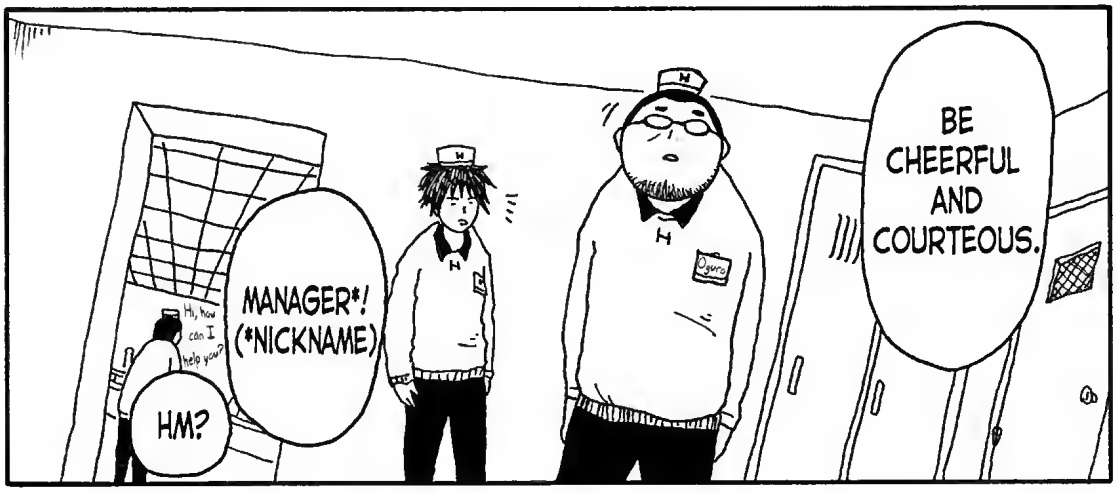
THAT'S RIGHT!

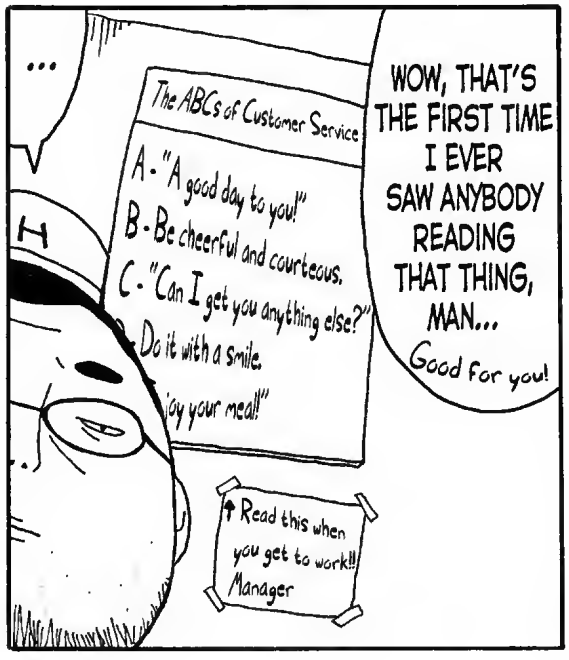

That'll be ¥50,000.
Midori
What?!
WELL, GEE... YOU ALWAYS GOT D'S IN ART, AND NOW YOU'RE DRAWING MANGA?
PLUS, I KNOW YOUR DAD, AND... HE'S LETTING YOU DO THIS? WITHOUT GETTING ON YOUR CASE?
And Suzuko's almost college age.
HEY, MIYATA, OLD BUDDY...
You're immortal, is that it?
You think you're immortal?
YOU THINK A GUY WHO CAN'T EVEN CONVINCE HIS OWN FAMILY...
...IS GOING TO CONVINCE HIS READERS? HUH?
ONE MORE OF THE SAME, KUNI-SAN.
SURE THING.
scurry
scurry
SURE, BUT...
YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING?!
Why're you losing it?
ZWUP

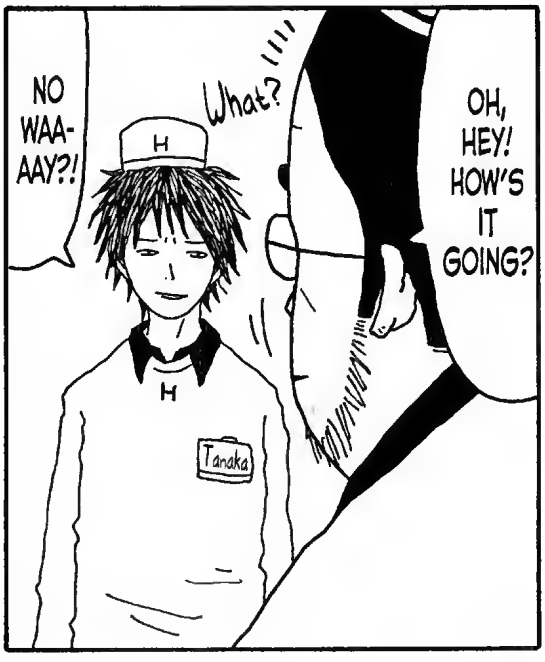
...
MIYATA, MY FRIEND.
Hi, how can I help you?
H
H
Oguro
...SERIOUSLY, THOUGH, BE HONEST WITH ME.
ISN'T WORKING AT A FAST FOOD JOINT, NEXT TO KIDS IN THEIR TEENS AND TWENTIES, A DOWNER AT THIS STAGE IN YOUR LIFE?
New Item!
Ham Burger
IT ISN'T COOL TO TALK LIKE YOU'RE A MATURE GROWN-UP AT THE MERE AGE OF FORTY-SOMETHING.
...No?
PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE, YOU KNOW? A DECADE OR TWO DOESN'T CHANGE THEM.
On the inside.
Sniff sniff
UH-OH, THIS IS TOTALLY ROTTEN...
...
HEY!
YOU GOTTA HAVE A FRESH OUTLOOK IN LIFE!


B.
A GOOD DAY TO YOU!
Oguro

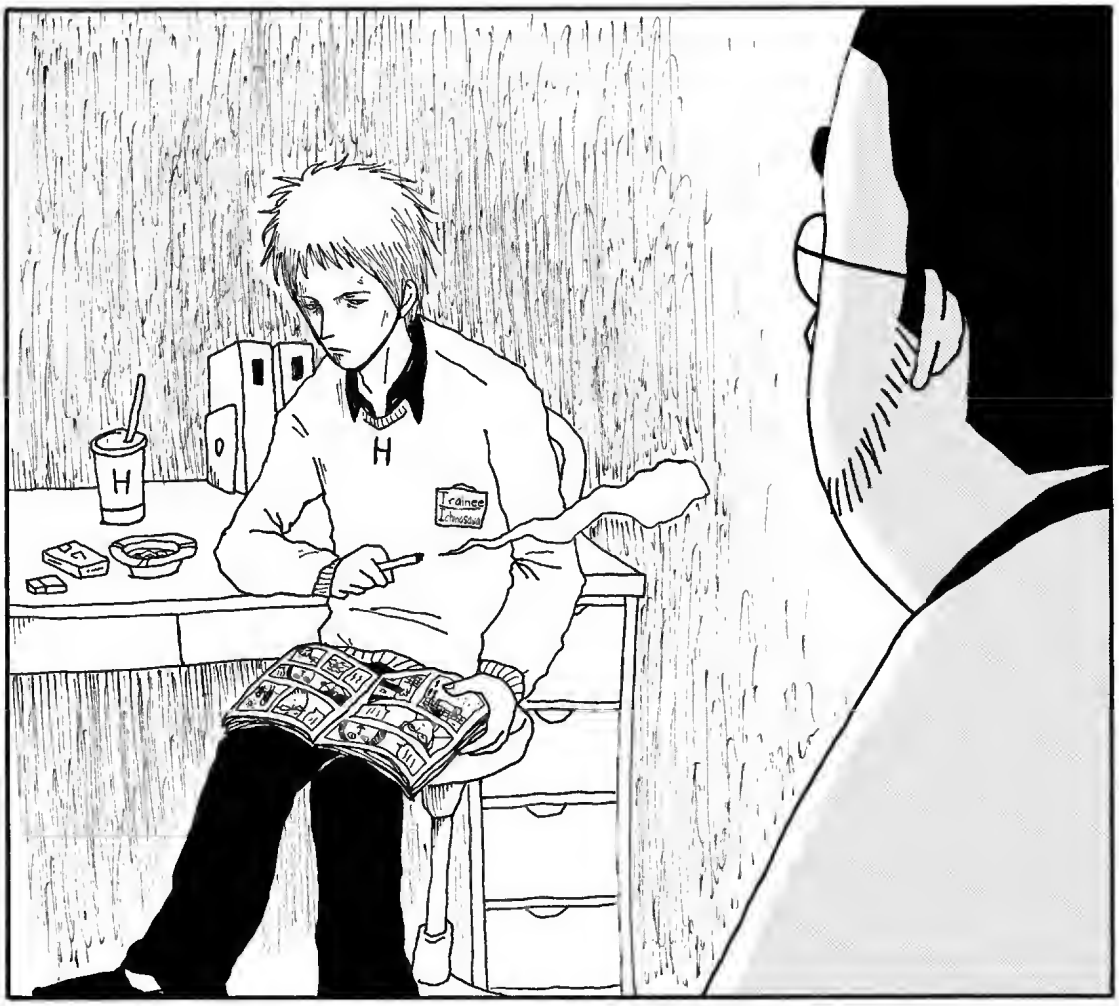

A.
H Burgers
H
Let's work together!
Now Hiring
Burgers

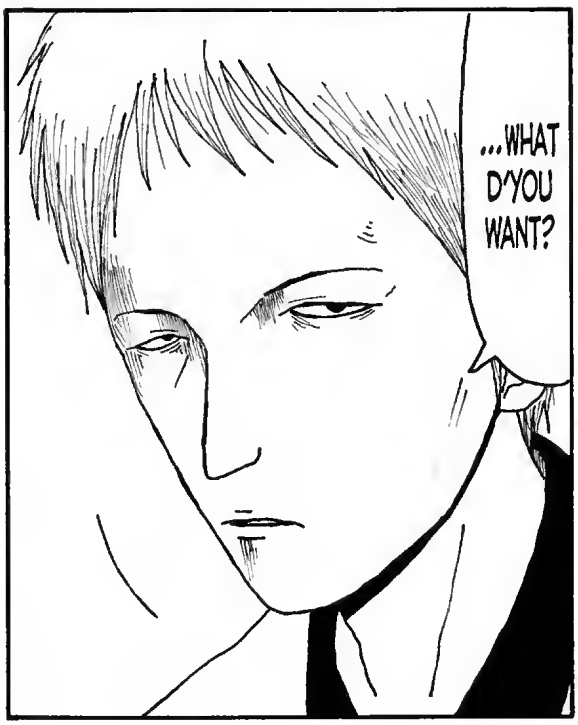

HM?
Hi, how can I help you?
MANAGER*! (*NICKNAME)
BE CHEERFUL AND COURTEOUS.
Oguro


...
The ABCs of Customer Service
A - "A good day to you!"
B - Be cheerful and courteous.
C - "Can I get you anything else?"
Do it with a smile.
Enjoy your meal!"
Read this when you get to work!!
Manager
WOW, THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I EVER SAW ANYBODY READING THAT THING, MAN...
Good for you!


NO WAA-AAY?!
What?
Tanaka
OH, HEY! HOW'S IT GOING?

H
OH, YEAH.
YOU KNOW THAT GUY ICHINOSAWA WHO STARTED TODAY?
H
Tanaka
WHAT'D YOU WANT?
OH, SORRY! DIDN'T MEAN TO CUT YOU OFF! GO AHEAD AND READ THE REST.
Next, C!
Would you like some fries with that?
No thanks.
NO, CUZ HE'S OLDER THAN ME, SO IT'S KINDA HARD...
And our real manager isn't here today.
WHAT'S AGE GOT TO DO WITH IT?
WELL, TEN MINUTES AFTER HE GETS HERE, HE'S LIKE, "I FEEL REALLY OUT OF IT," AND HE'S JUST TOTALLY SLACKING OFF.
Like, do some work!
DID YOU SAY ANYTHING?
IN THE MANAGER'S OFFICE.
Thanks!
Manager's Office
OKAY, I'LL TEACH HIM FOR THINKING HE CAN JUST LOUNGE AROUND AT WORK. THE WORLD DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT, NO SIR!
H
Jeez!
OH, ALL RIGHT, FINE.
WHERE IS HE?
H
Work faster!!
I MEAN, HEY, TANAKA. WHEN I FIRST STARTED HERE, YOU WERE PRETTY DARN TOUGH ON ME. YOU GAVE ME A REAL HARD TIME.
And I'm a lot older than you...
I DON'T THINK SO...

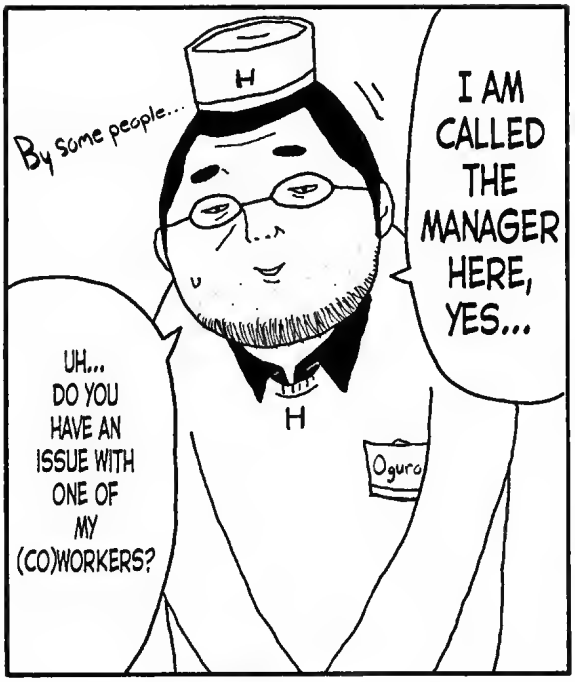



...WHAT D'YOU WANT?

...

I DUNNO. I'M NOT SURE WHAT IT IS, BUT...
I FEEL REALLY LOUSY.
YOU SICK?
I BET YOU HAVE A COLD. GOTTA BE!
yup yup
YOU LOOK PRETTY GREEN AROUND THE GILLS.
YOU GOTTA TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, OR-
KAICHAK
Excuse me...
YOU CAN JUST TAKE IT EASY TODAY.
Since the manager isn't here and all.
OH YEAH? THANKS...
BEST THING FOR A COLD IS PLENTY OF REST.

Did I make myself clear?!
SHWA
YOU GOT THAT?!
?!
yup
Ichinosawa-kun?!
NOW... HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
UM!
turn
...
UH, YEAH...
...
KAICHAK
It's all under control.
IT SEEMED LIKE THEY MIGHT GET INTO A FIGHT, SO I THOUGHT I BETTER COME GET YOU...
You're a grown-up, after all.
Please don't touch me.
tmp
tmp
GOTCHA. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
What?
TANAKA-KUN GOT INTO THIS ARGUMENT WITH SOME CUSTOMERS, AND...
...NOW THE CUSTOMERS ARE TELLING HIM TO COME OUTSIDE.

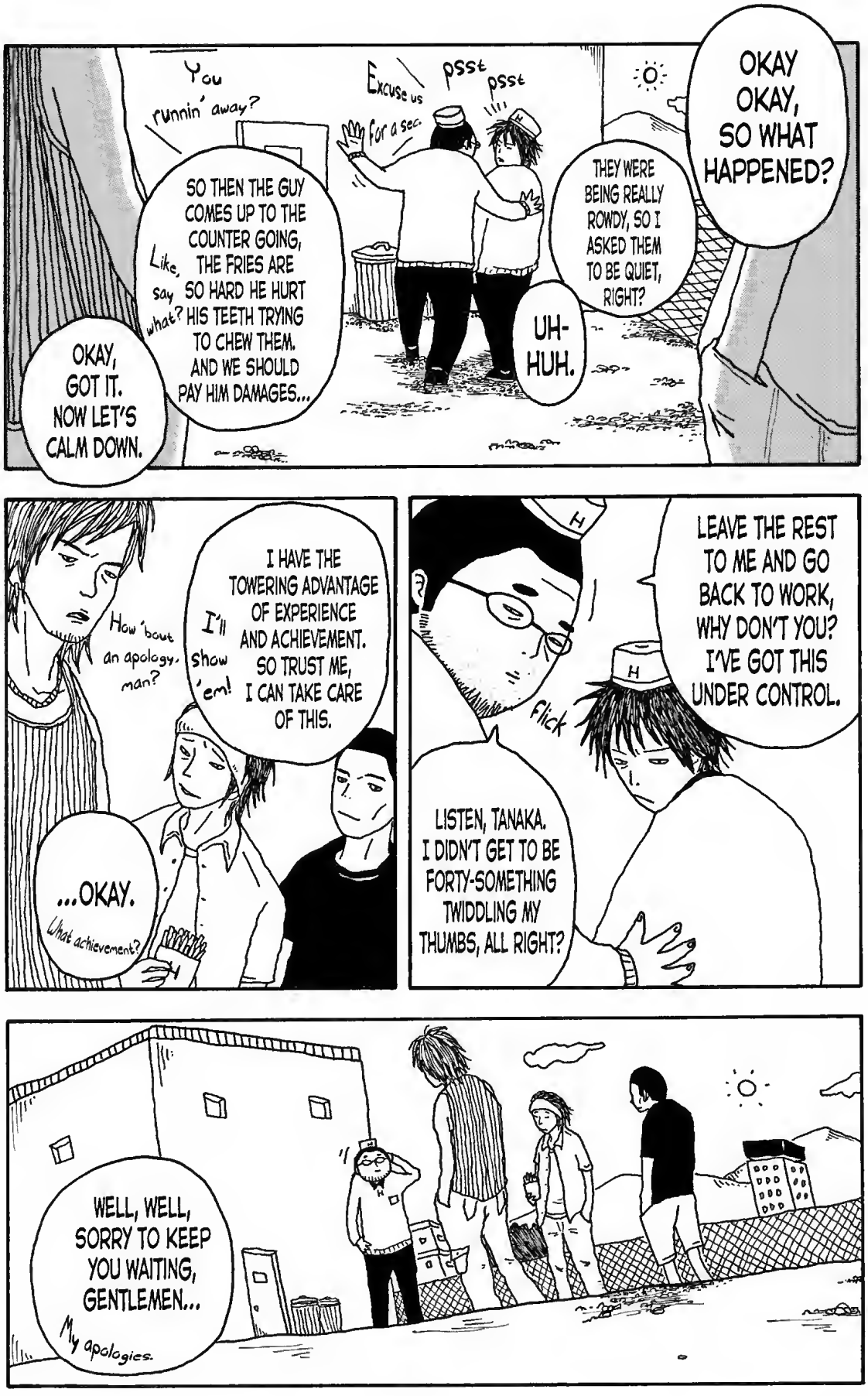

By some people...
I AM CALLED THE MANAGER HERE, YES...
UH... DO YOU HAVE AN ISSUE WITH ONE OF MY (CO)WORKERS?
Oguro

SO WHAT'S THE DEAL, YOU'RE THE MANAGER?

THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED, MANAGER!
THESE JERKS WERE TOTALLY PICKING A FIGHT WITH ME.
Tanaka

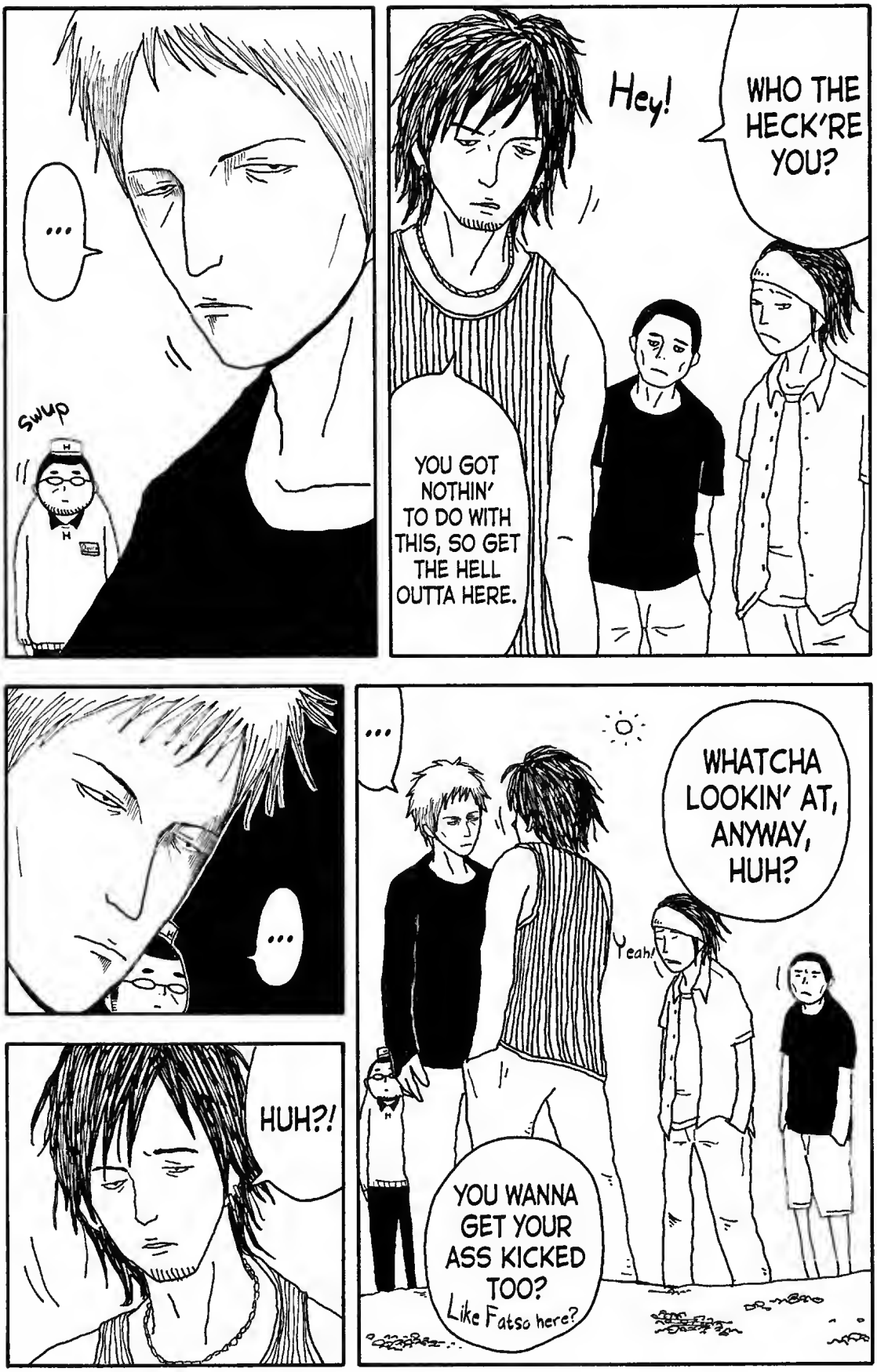
Watch your mouth, buttheadl
Okay, okay.
Oh, sorry, jerk-offs.
THESE JERKS? THAT HOW YOU TALK TO YOUR CUSTOMERS?
STOP STOP STOP STOP!!

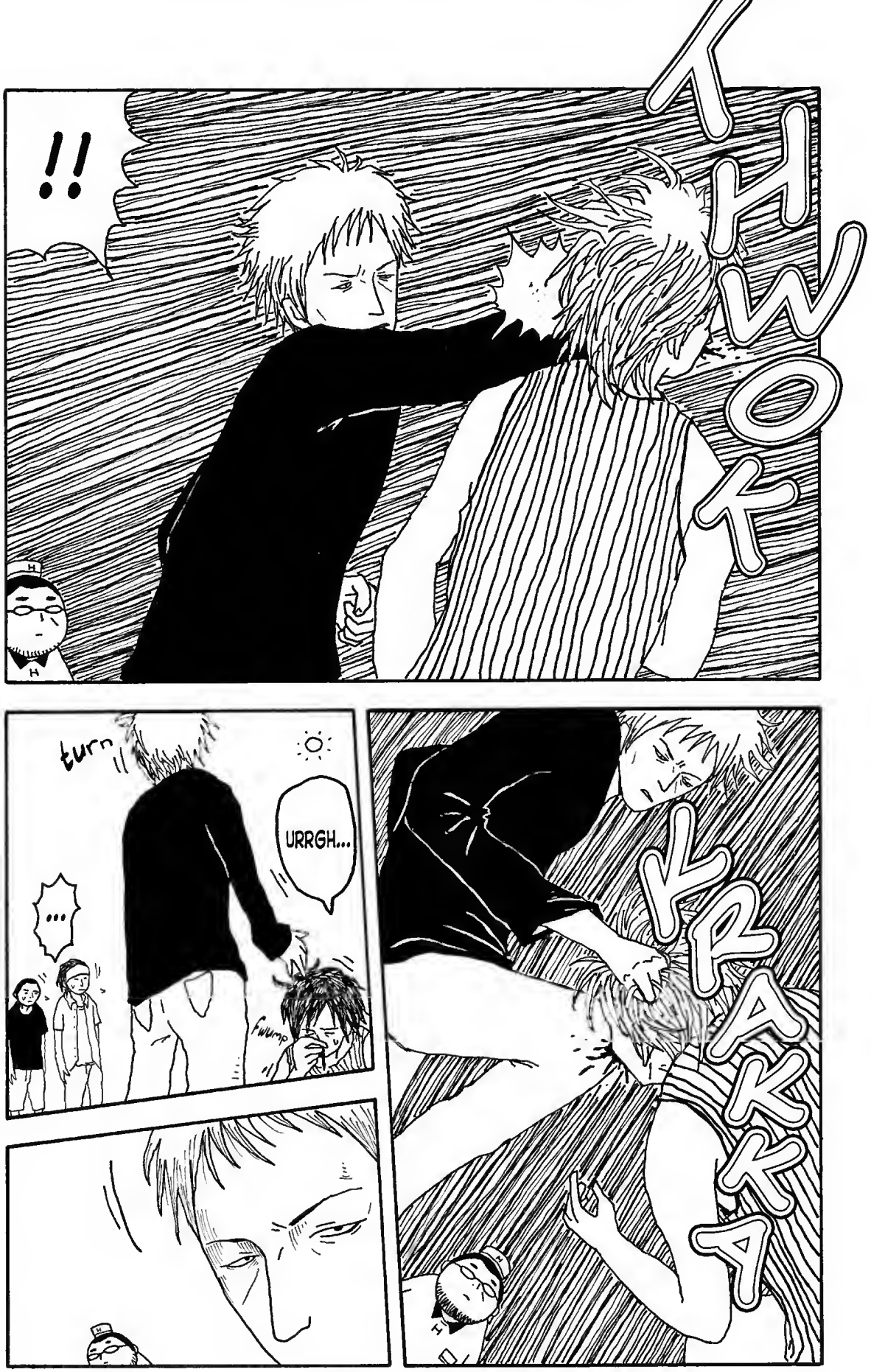
WHAT THE HELL KIND OF TRAINING YOU GIVE THESE GUYS, MAN?
heh
heh
CUSTOMER COMES TO HIM WITH A COMPLAINT, DUDE DOESN'T EVEN APOLOGIZE.


You runnin' away?
Excuse us for a sec.
psst psst
OKAY OKAY, SO WHAT HAPPENED?
THEY WERE BEING REALLY ROWDY, SO I ASKED THEM TO BE QUIET, RIGHT?
UH-HUH.
SO THEN THE GUY COMES UP TO THE COUNTER GOING, Like, say what? THE FRIES ARE SO HARD HE HURT HIS TEETH TRYING TO CHEW THEM. AND WE SHOULD PAY HIM DAMAGES...
OKAY, GOT IT. NOW LET'S CALM DOWN.
How 'bout an apology, man?
I'll show 'em!
I HAVE THE TOWERING ADVANTAGE OF EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT. SO TRUST ME, I CAN TAKE CARE OF THIS.
...OKAY.
What achievement?
LEAVE THE REST TO ME AND GO BACK TO WORK, WHY DON'T YOU? I'VE GOT THIS UNDER CONTROL.
Flick
LISTEN, TANAKA. I DIDN'T GET TO BE FORTY-SOMETHING TWIDDLING MY THUMBS, ALL RIGHT?
WELL, WELL, SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING, GENTLEMEN...
My apologies.

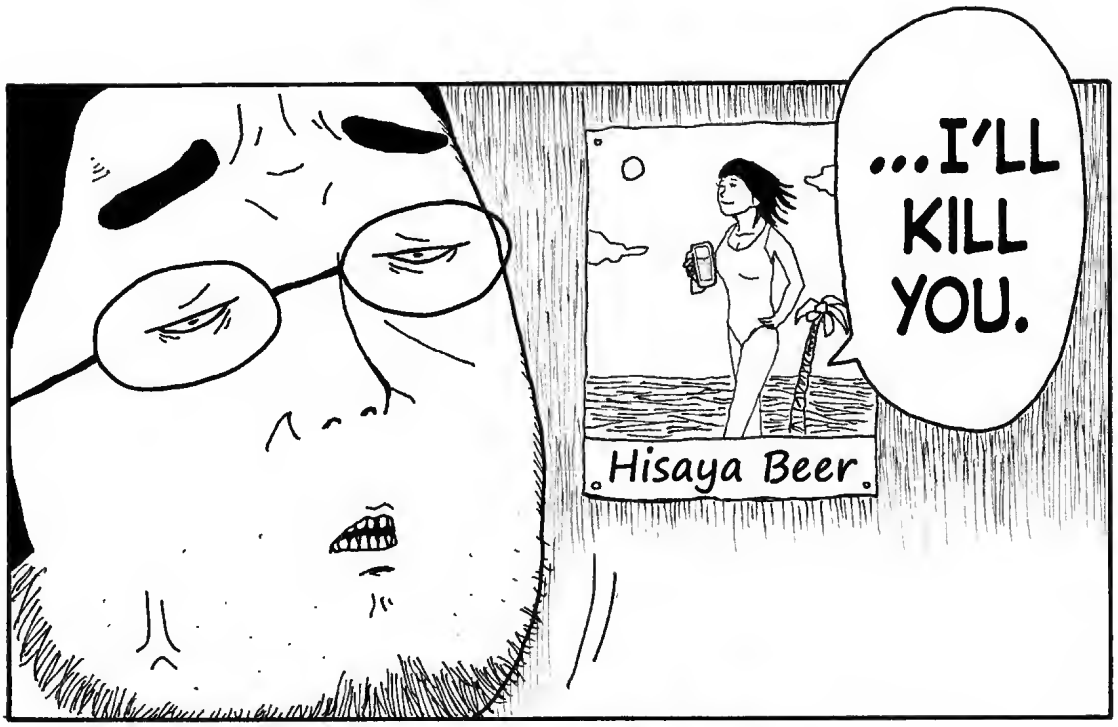
YOU BET I HAVE A COMPLAINT, BOZO!
...Bozo?
grr
What might it be?
YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT REGARDING OUR FAMOUS FRENCH FRIES?
Oguro
They're cold now, but still.
THESE FRIES'RE HARD, MAN.
Here, stuff 'em into your mouth all at once.
YOU TRY EATING THESE, THEN, FAT FACE.
Fat Face?!
OKAY...
grrrrr
THE FACT IS, THANKS TO YOUR FRIES, I HURT MYSELF, OKAY? I THINK I BROKE A TOOTH.
So gimme some money in damages.
WELL... I HAVE TO SAY I FIND THAT A BIT-
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME?! YOU CALLING ME A LIAR, MAN?!
I'm gonna sue your ass.

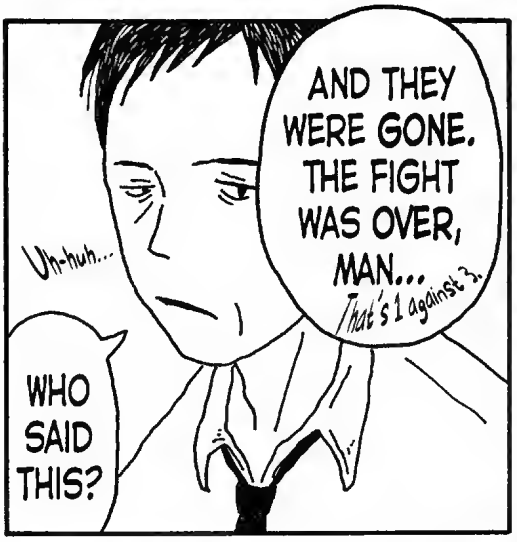
...
Chomp
I'M IN PAIN HERE, OKAY?
PAY ME SOME DAMAGES AND WE'RE COOL!
YOU CAN STOP NOW!
Mwush
Mwush
Hard, right?
...
H
H
Oguro
THIS SLIGHT CRUNCHINESS AROUND THE EDGES IS OUR FAMOUS FRENCH FRIES' BEST-LOVED-
SCREW THAT!
HEY!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
...
HM?
...
THOUGHT I'D GO HOME...
Since I'm feeling so lousy.


...
swup
Hey!
WHO THE HECK'RE YOU?
YOU GOT NOTHIN' TO DO WITH THIS, SO GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE.
...
...
HUH?!
WHATCHA LOOKIN' AT, ANYWAY, HUH?
Yeah!
YOU WANNA GET YOUR ASS KICKED TOO? Like Fatso here?


!!
THWOK
turn
URRGH...
...
FWUMP
KRAKKA

...YOU THINK YOU'RE TALKING TO, ASSHOLE?
WHO THE HELL...
...
YOU MESS WITH ME AGAIN...
...
HUH?!
YUP
YUP
YUP


...I'LL KILL YOU.
Hisaya Beer.

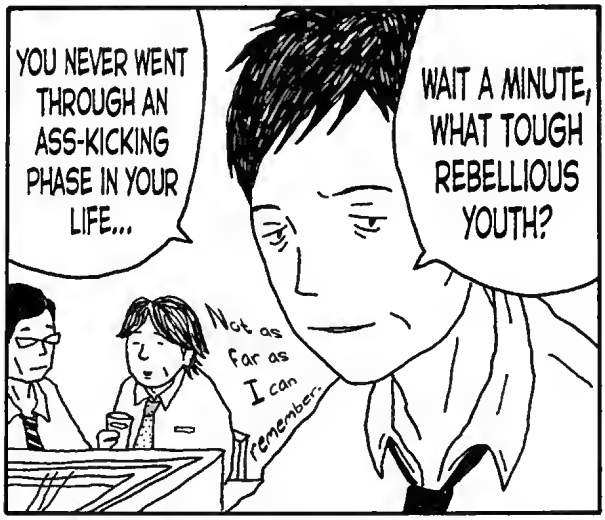

AND THEY WERE GONE. THE FIGHT WAS OVER, MAN...
That's 1 against 3.
Uh-huh...
WHO SAID THIS?

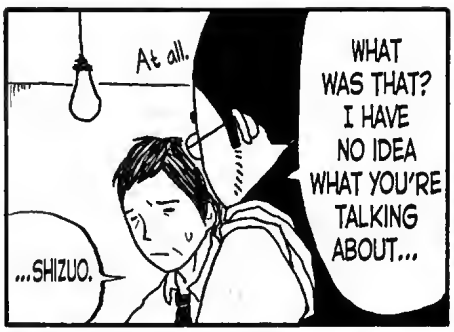
...I TOLD YOU WHO. ME. I SAID IT!
You listening to me or what?
DID I MENTION ANYBODY ELSE? HUH?
No, I did not!

...
Mofo.
Hisa
Oguro Union

(41)
(41)
I'M GONNA TURN MY OWN TOUGH, REBELLIOUS YOUTH INTO ART!
It'll be my first nonfiction work.
SO, THAT BEING THE CASE, MY NEXT EFFORT'S GONNA BE AN ASS-KICKER MANGA!!
About a real hell-raiser!
Oguro Union

ha ha ha!
You a member of the Broccoli family?
What's with that hair, dude?
OR WHAT, YOU MEAN THOSE TIMES THE TOUGH KIDS MESSED WITH YOU? THAT HAPPENED A LOT.
THEY'D CALL YOU "A NEW TYPE OF VEGETABLE" AND STUFF LIKE THAT...

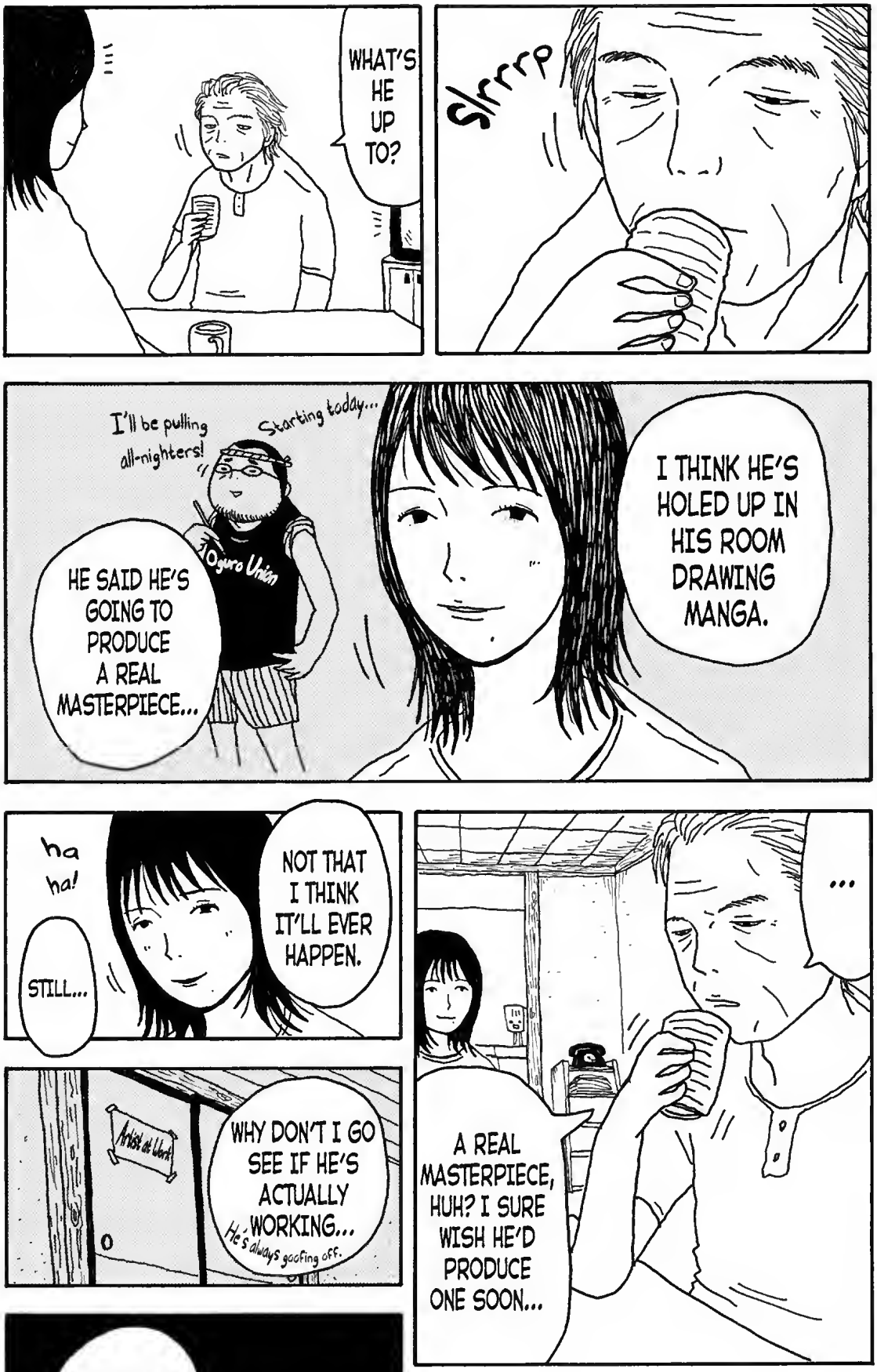

YOU NEVER WENT THROUGH AN ASS-KICKING PHASE IN YOUR LIFE...
Not as far as I can remember.
WAIT A MINUTE, WHAT TOUGH REBELLIOUS YOUTH?


At all.
WHAT WAS THAT? I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...
...SHIZUO.

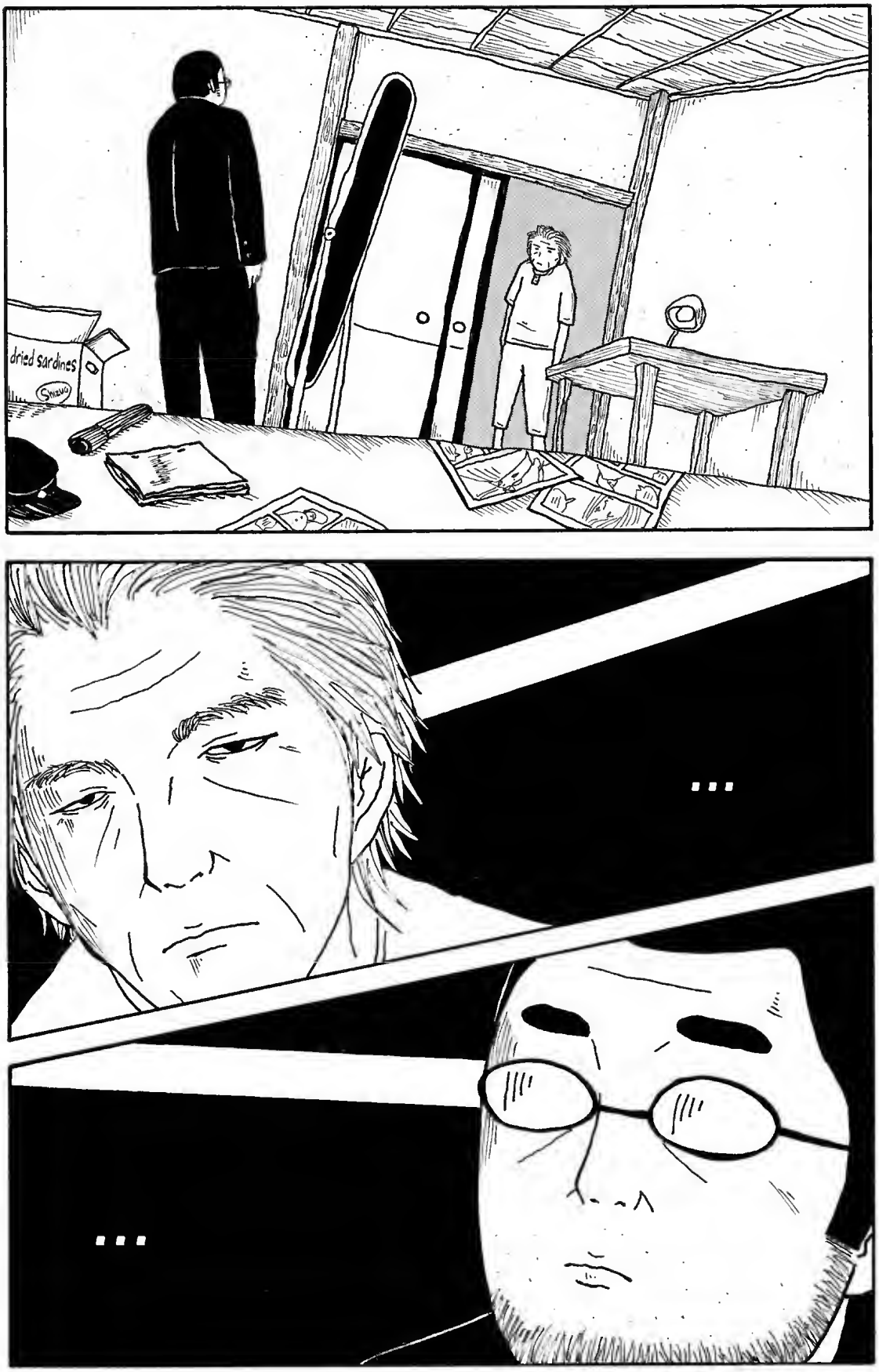
...
YOU ARE ONE HARDY SOUL...
A true survivor.

HM?
hahaha!
HUH?
Beer
Oguro Union

gwumph
KAIPOW
hmmm
...
KRACH
KRACH
KRACH
You Talkin' to Me?
Shizuka Ogawa
I-1
dip
SORRY FOR THE TROUBLE...
...
...AND THANKS FOR EVERYTHING.
Please tell the manager.
Hope you get over that cold...
KRACH
KRACH
Better take care of yourself...
Ichinosawa...

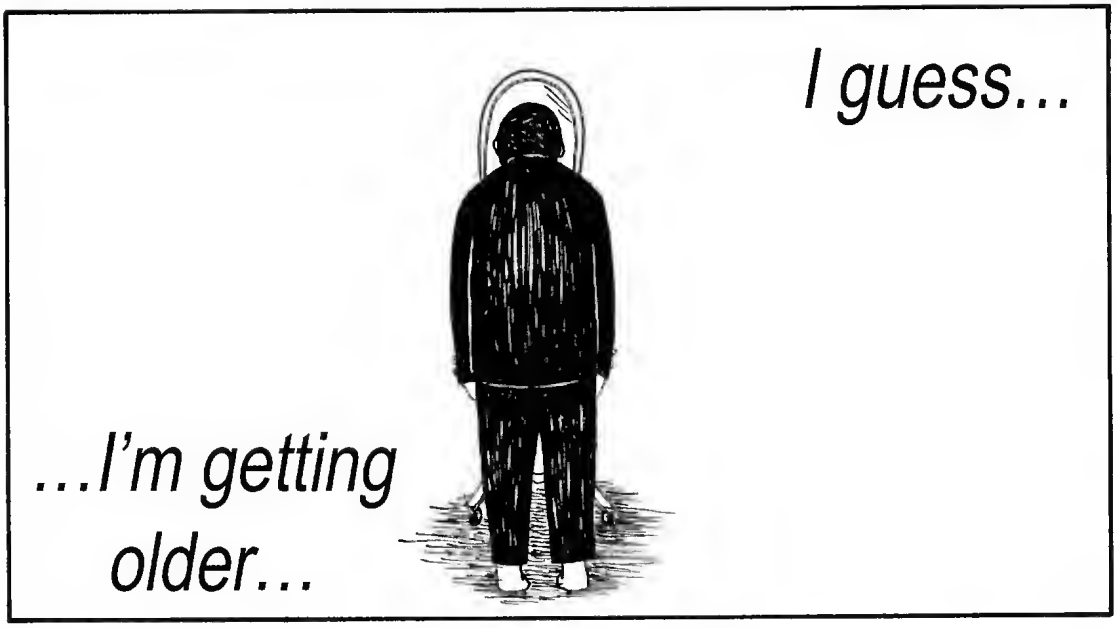

WHAT'S HE UP TO?
Slrrrp
I'll be pulling all-nighters!
Starting today...
Oguro Union
HE SAID HE'S GOING TO PRODUCE A REAL MASTERPIECE...
I THINK HE'S HOLED UP IN HIS ROOM DRAWING MANGA.
ha ha!
STILL...
NOT THAT I THINK IT'LL EVER HAPPEN.
...
A REAL MASTERPIECE, HUH? I SURE WISH HE'D PRODUCE ONE SOON...
Artist at Work
WHY DON'T I GO SEE IF HE'S ACTUALLY WORKING...
He's always goofing off.
HEY SHIZUO, I'M COMING I-

WHOA...
...

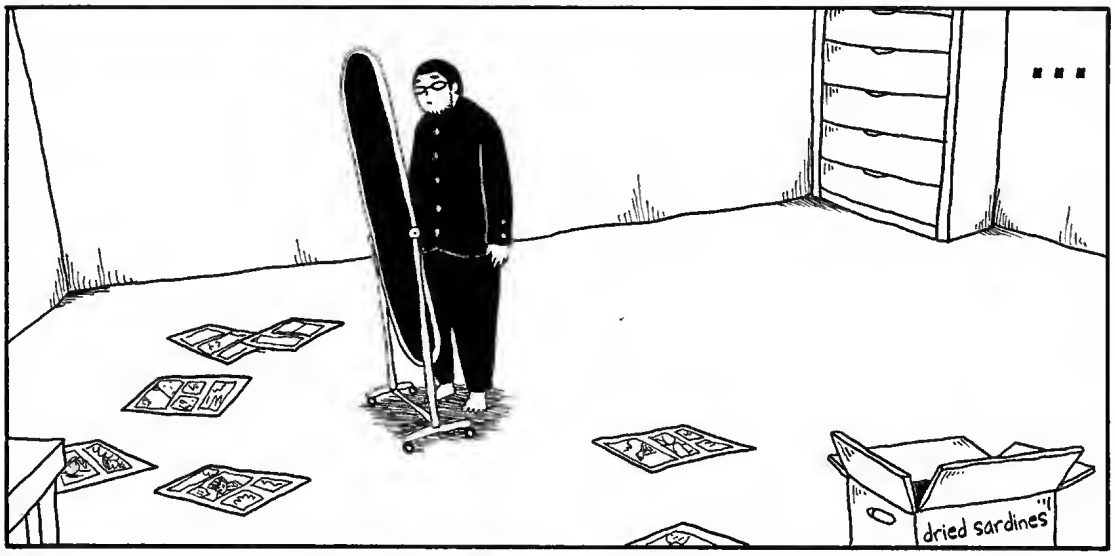

dried sardines
...
...

...
dried sardines
...
dried sardines
...
dried sardines
WHAT?
SHWAP
Look at you...
Dude.

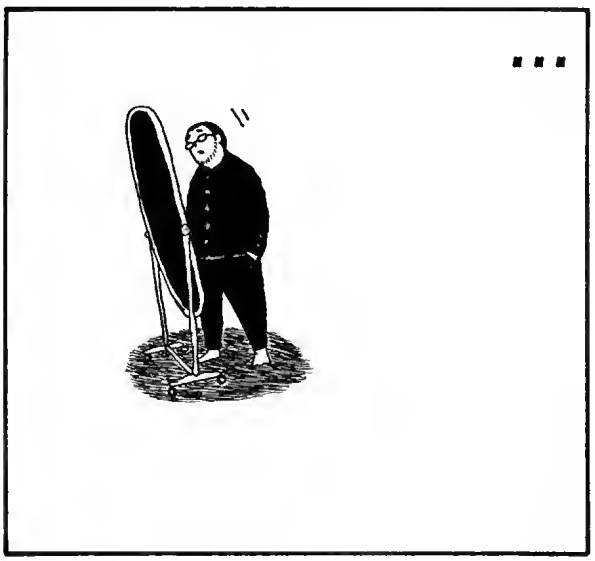
You are...
...totally middle-aged...


I guess...
...I'm getting older...

I really am.


...
dried sardines

WHATCHA LOOKIN' AT?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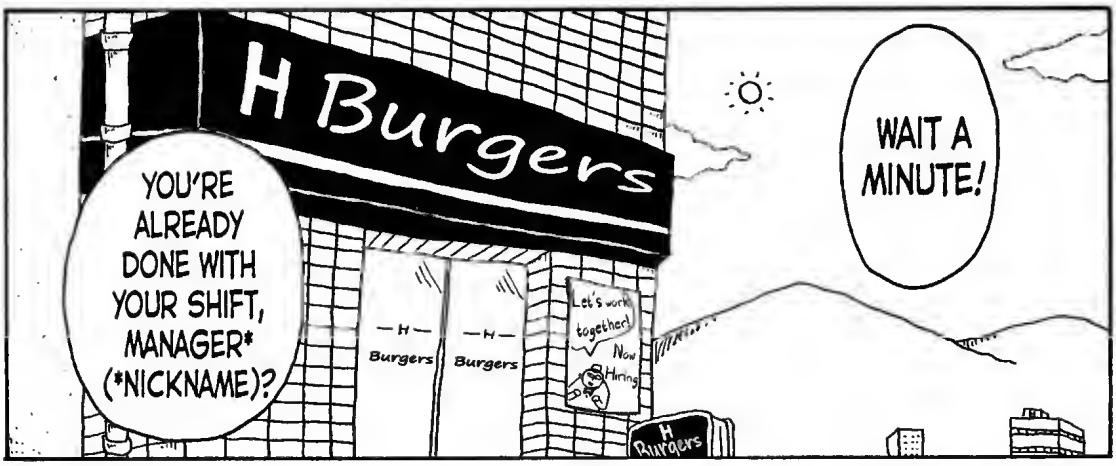
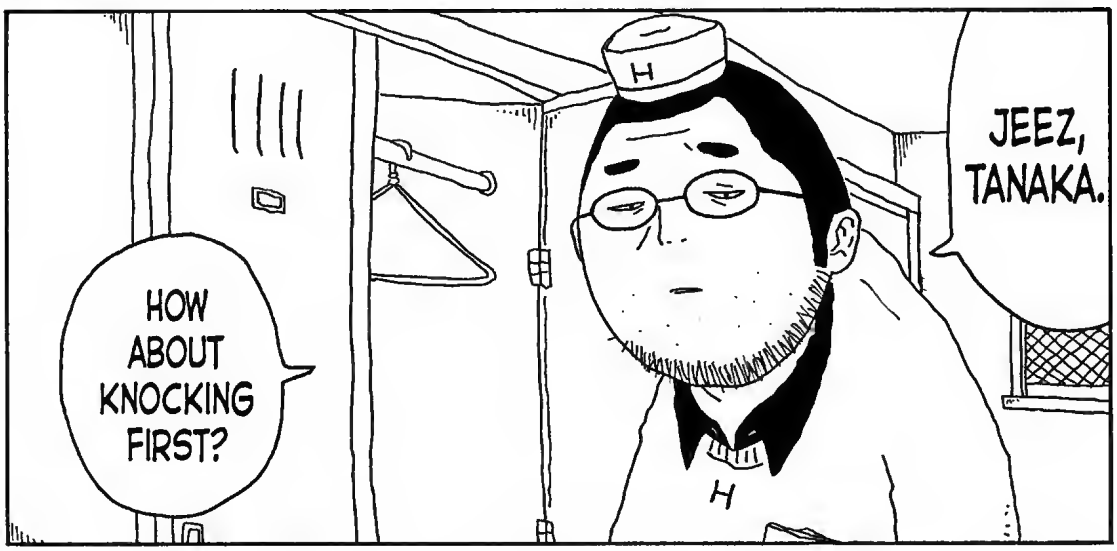
Chapter 2:

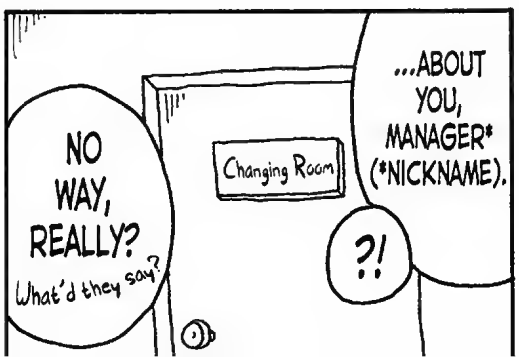
It Tastes Best When It's Starting to Go Bad


H Burgers
YOU'RE ALREADY DONE WITH YOUR SHIFT, MANAGER* (*NICKNAME)?
WAIT A MINUTE!
Let's work together!
Now Hiring
H Burgers

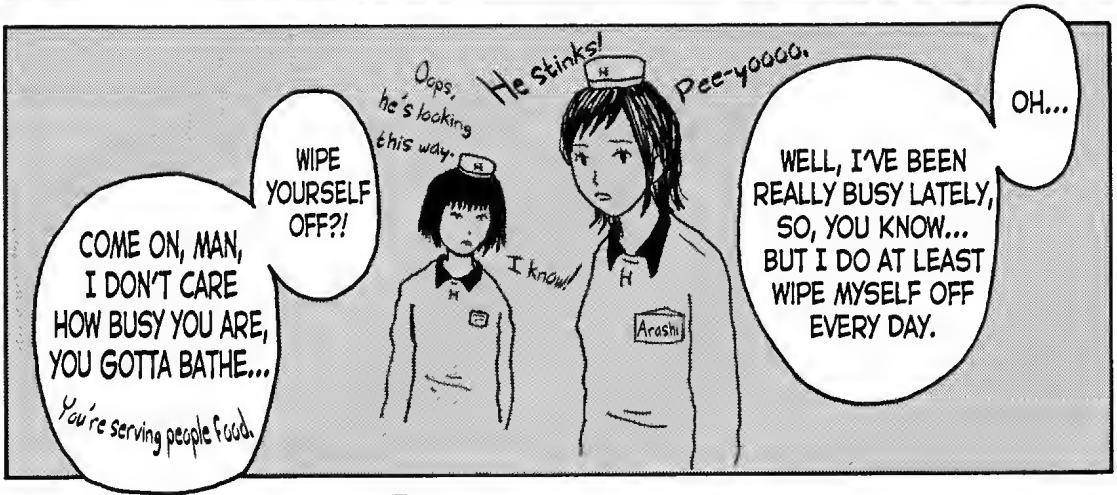

HOW ABOUT KNOCKING FIRST?
JEEZ, TANAKA.

SEE, I OVERHEARD THE GIRLS TALKING TODAY...
WELL, I JUST THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW...
Tanaka

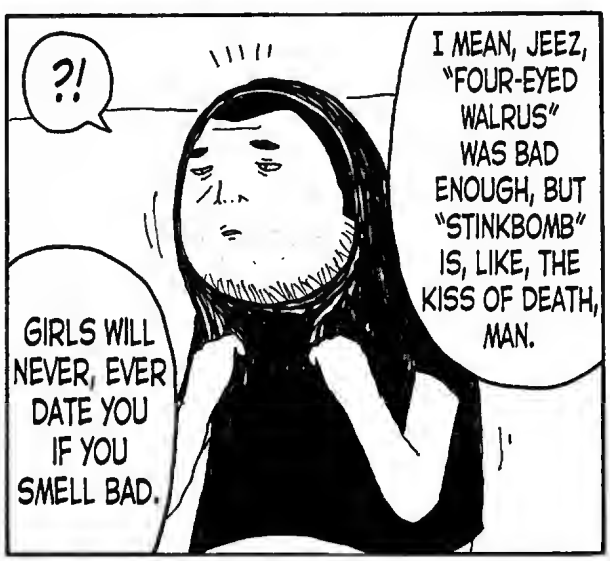
UH-HUH.
BUT YEAH, I'M DONE. AND I GOTTA RUN. I'M A BUSY GUY.


NO WAY, REALLY?
What'd they say?
Changing Room
?!
...ABOUT YOU, MANAGER* (*NICKNAME).

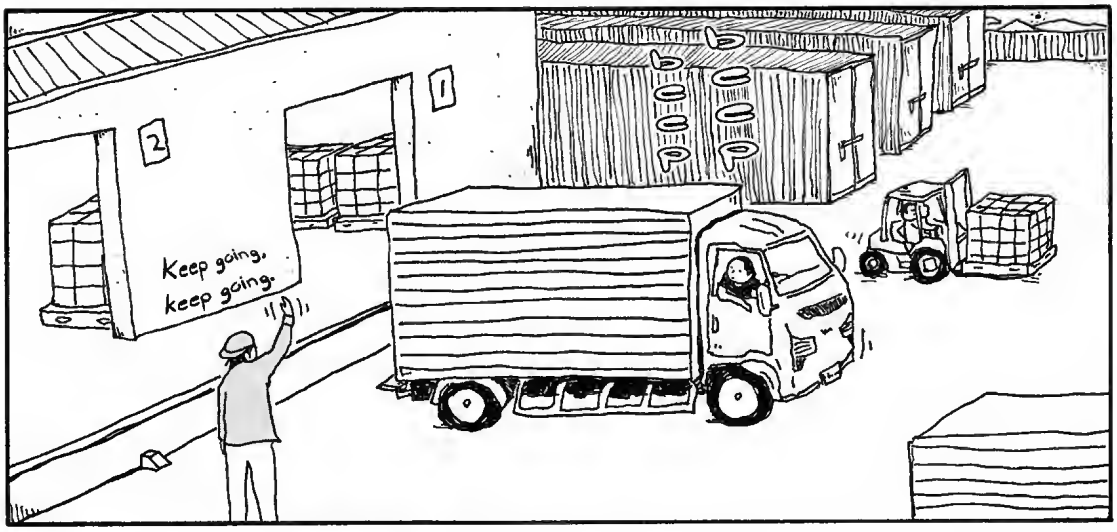
THAT YOU SMELL BAD.

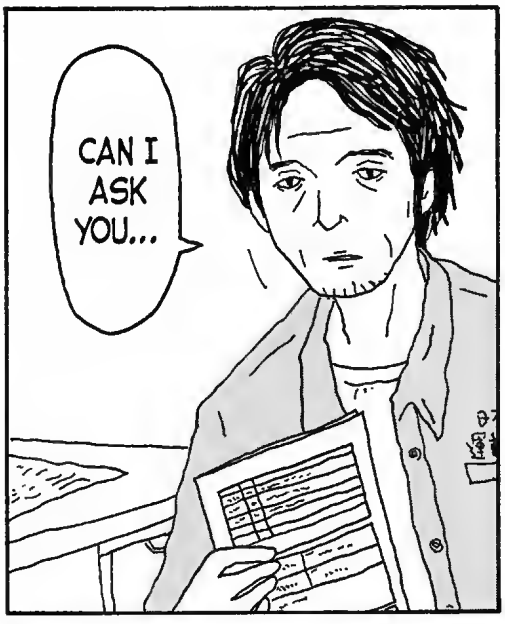

COME ON, MAN, I DON'T CARE HOW BUSY YOU ARE, YOU GOTTA BATHE...
You're serving people food.
WIPE YOURSELF OFF?!
Oops, he's looking this way.
He stinks!
Pee-yoooo.
I know!
Arashi
WELL, I'VE BEEN REALLY BUSY LATELY, SO, YOU KNOW... BUT I DO AT LEAST WIPE MYSELF OFF EVERY DAY.
OH...

LISTEN, TANAKA, KIDDO...
Tanaka
DATE ME?


GIRLS WILL NEVER, EVER DATE YOU IF YOU SMELL BAD.
?!
I MEAN, JEEZ, "FOUR-EYED WALRUS" WAS BAD ENOUGH, BUT "STINKBOMB" IS, LIKE, THE KISS OF DEATH, MAN.

SO DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME, KID.
...
WHEN A MAN GETS TO BE MY AGE, IT'S ALL ABOUT WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE, SEE. WHO YOU ARE. THAT'S WHAT COUNTS.
KIDS LIKE YOU AND THOSE GIRLS, YOU JUST DON'T GET WHAT MAKES ME TICK. WHAT MAKES ME REALLY SEXY.
tmp
tmp
All right, so I stink.
SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT...
...IS THAT HE'S POPULAR WITH GUYS.
LIKE I AM!
Supercars
ARE YOU GAY?
NO!
...
LISTEN, TANAKA. I'M GONNA LET YOU IN ON A LITTLE SECRET. THE MARK OF A REAL MAN, SEE...
rattle rattle
rattle rattle

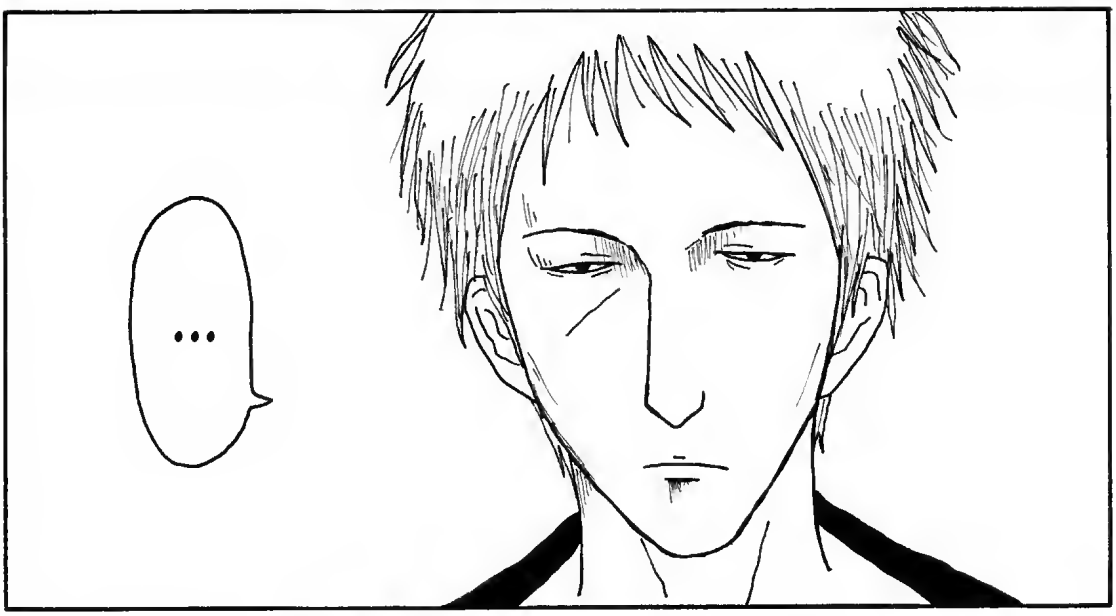

1
2
Keep going, keep going.


CAN I ASK YOU...

I SEE YOU HAVEN'T LASTED VERY LONG AT ANY OF YOUR PREVIOUS JOBS...
...

YES?
Resume
Shuichi Ichinosawa
Age
(26)
Gender
M
F

...IF YOU HAVE A CRIMINAL RECORD?


...

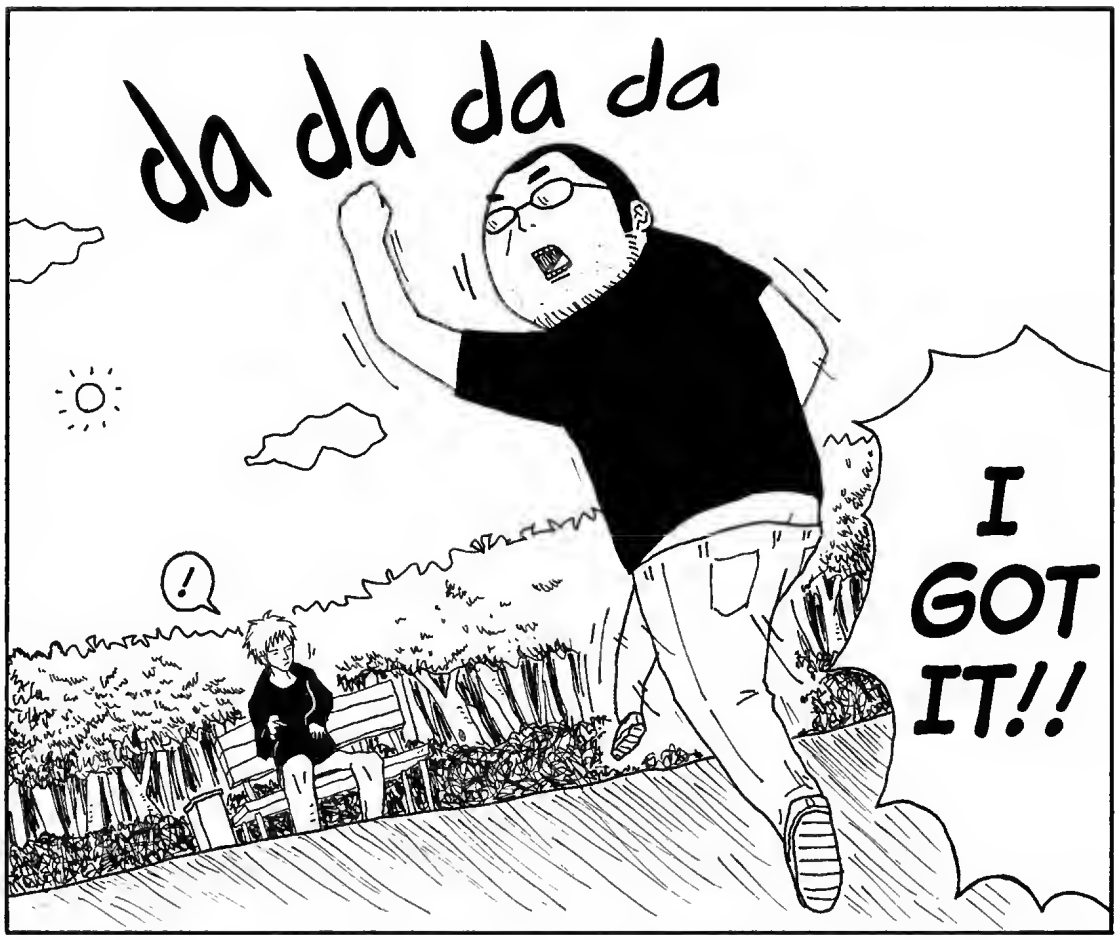
...

SO YOU DO?

...
wooo
whee

Center field!
ta ta ta ta

KAITHWOK


da da da da
!
I GOT IT!!

...
I GOT IT!!

I GOT IT!!
da da da

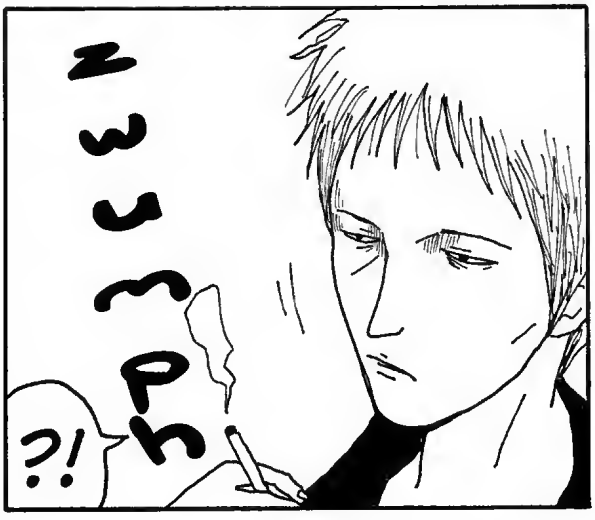
OH NO-OO!!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?! YOU SAID YOU GOT IT!!
FWOP
bing
wheez wheez
...
HERE YOU GO!!
WOOSH
wheez
wheez
BOY, THAT HAD A WICKED CURVE ON IT...
Fooled me
Supercars
HM?

hanh
hanh
HEY, DON'T I KNOW YOU?! YOU'RE ....
ICHI-NOSAWA...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
On that bench.
UH, NOTHING...
Just sitting...
hanh
hanh
OKAY ....
Supercars
WELL, WHADDAYA SAY WE GO GET A BITE TO EAT TOGETHER?
Since we ran into each other and all.
Hey, Pops!
Come on!
SO WE'LL GO OUT LATER!
Since I'm in the middle of a game.
...
I DON'T HAVE ANY FUNDS RIGHT NOW, SO...
Can't do it.
Plus I hardly know you...
OH, COME ON! THAT'S NOT THE KINDA THING A YOUNG FELLA LIKE YOU OUGHTA WORRY ABOUT!

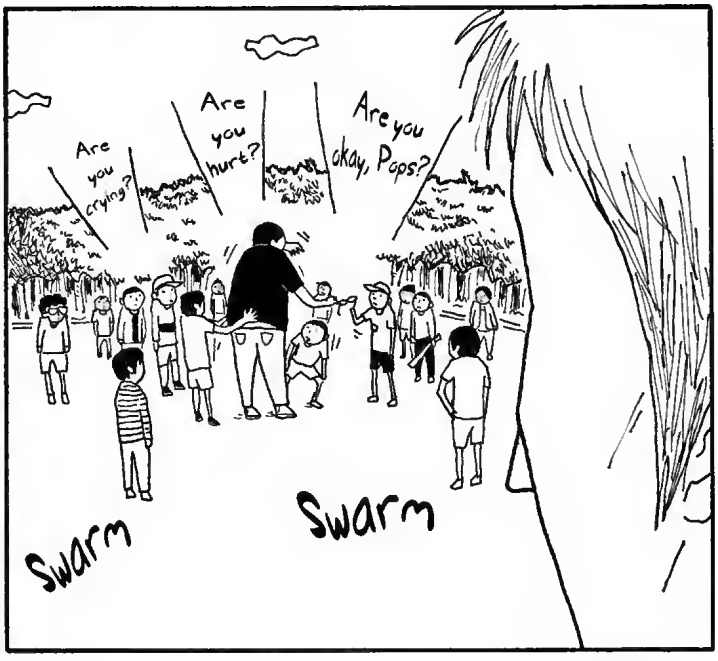
Got it!
tatatatata
Center field!

Look sharp out there!
...
Supercars

waaa waaa
HEY, EVERYBODY! THE OLD GUY FELL!
POPS!
...


mmmph
?!

waaa waaa
...

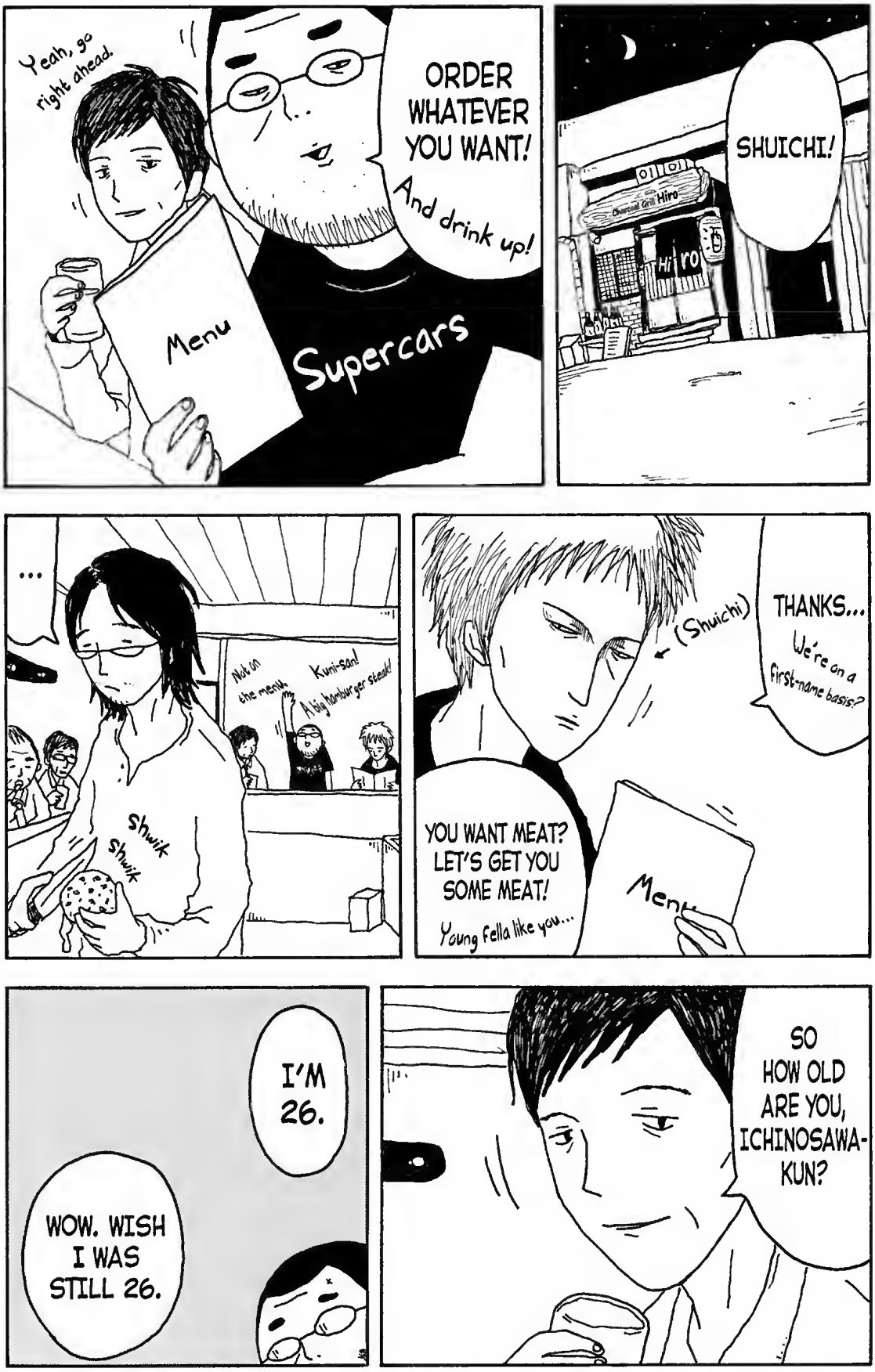

Are you crying?
Are you hurt?
Are you okay, Pops?
Swarm
Swarm

YOU'RE LATE, MIYATA!

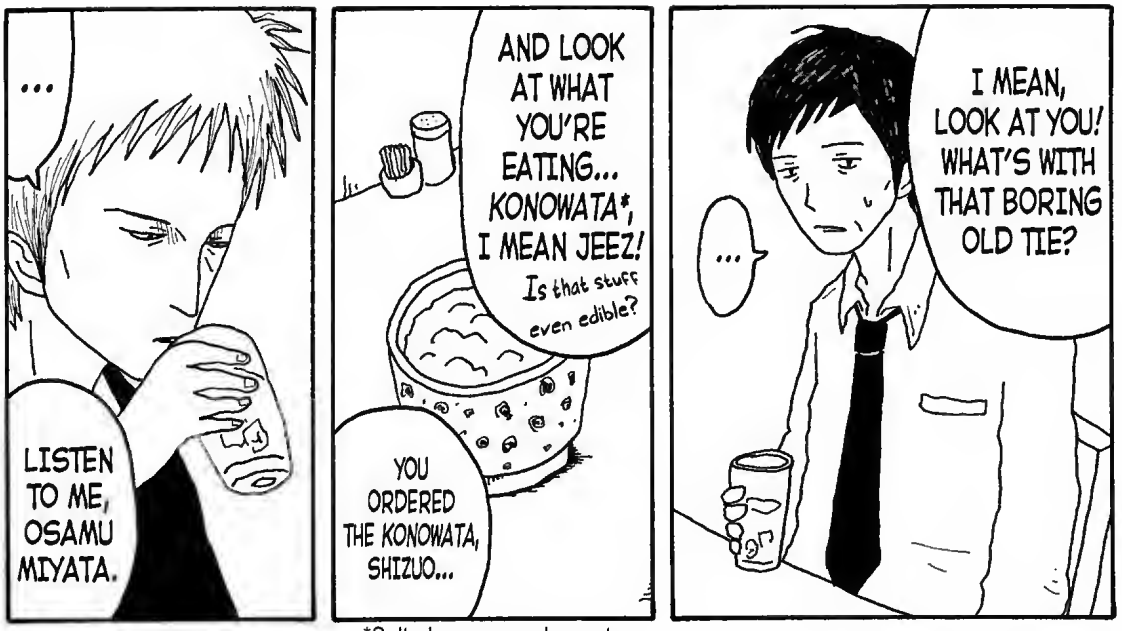
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
What'm I late for?
WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY PLANS TODAY, DID WE?

WELL, WE JUST HAPPENED TO BE IN THE PARK OVER THERE AND ALL, SO...
SO... WHAT?

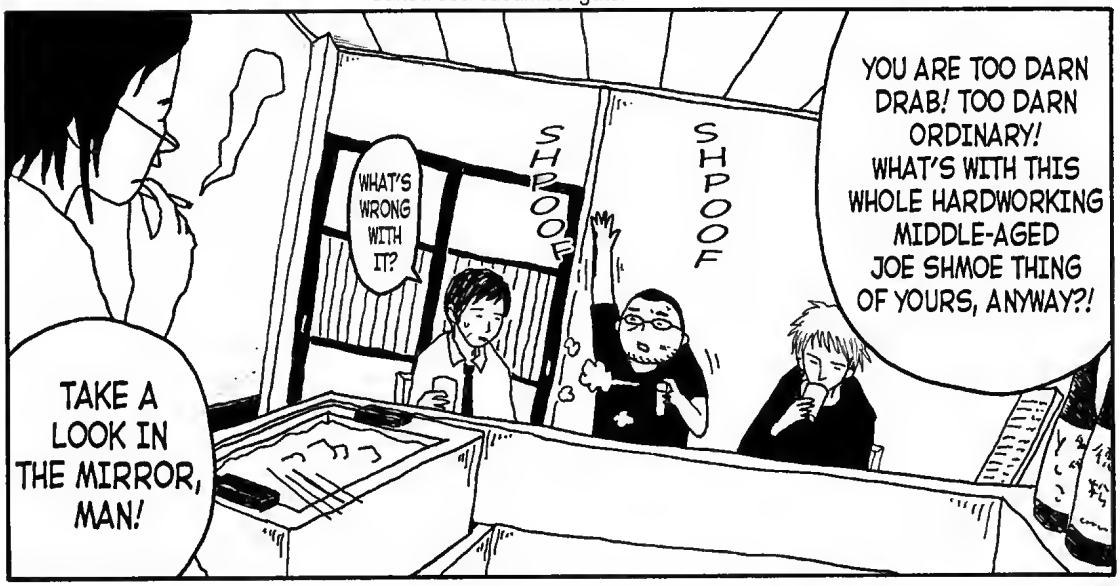
HOW LONG D'YOU EXPECT US TO WAIT FOR YOU, MAN?
We're both starving, okay?
NWOOP
Supercars
dip
...
SHIZUO?!

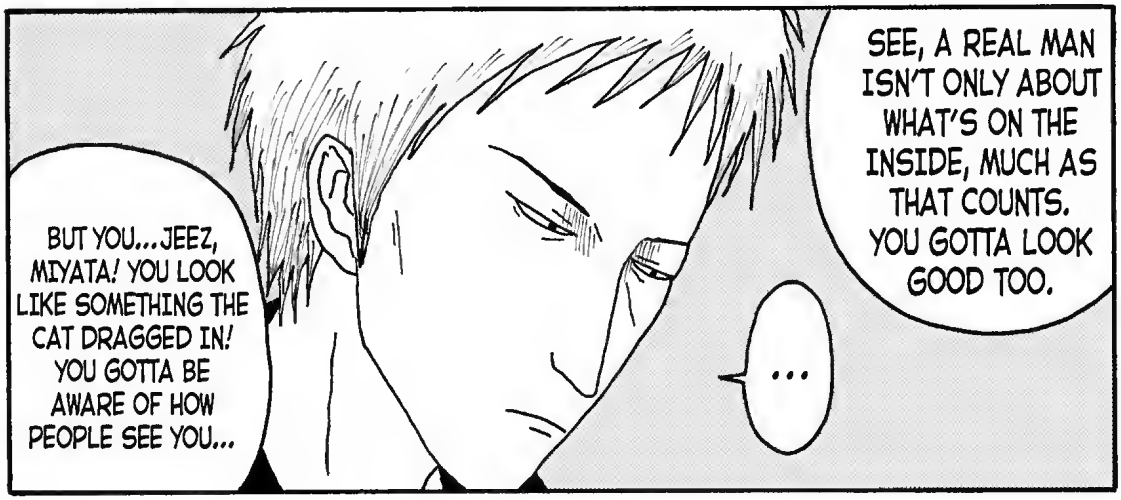

Yeah, go right ahead.
ORDER WHATEVER YOU WANT!
And drink up!
Menu
Supercars
SHUICHI!
Charcoal Grill Hiro
Hiro
...
Nuts on the menu.
Kuni-San! A big hamburger steak!
Shwik
Shwik
(Shuichi)
THANKS...
We're on a first-name basis?
YOU WANT MEAT? LET'S GET YOU SOME MEAT!
Young fella like you...
Menu
I'M 26.
WOW. WISH I WAS STILL 26.
SO HOW OLD ARE YOU, ICHINOSAWA-KUN?

?!
SHOOF
Menu
Menu
"WOW, I WISH I WAS STILL 26"?
THAT LINE STINKS, BUDDY. IT STINKS...
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
MIYATA, BUDDY...
YOU STINK, YOU OLD FART!!

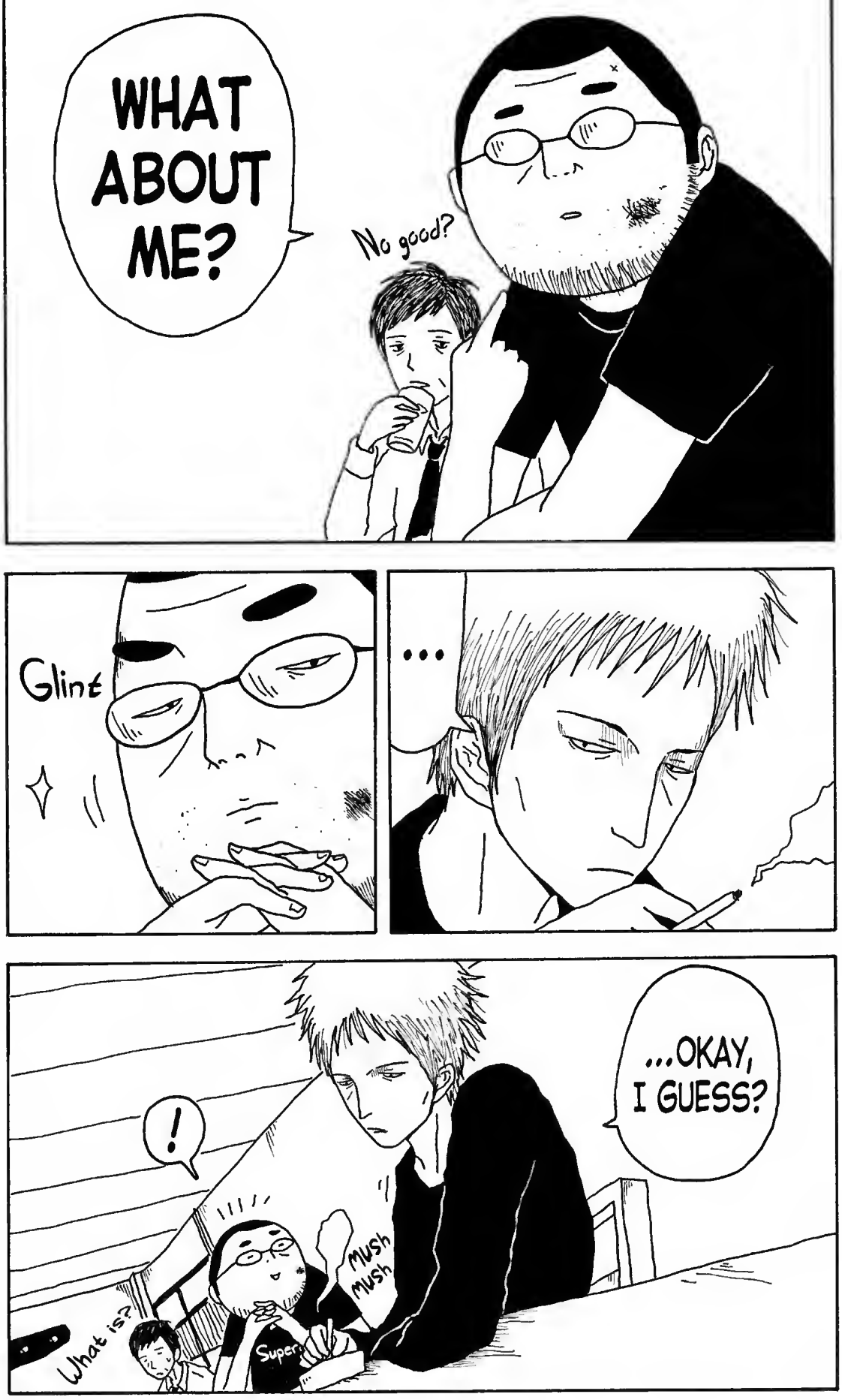

...
LISTEN TO ME, OSAMU MIYATA.
AND LOOK AT WHAT YOU'RE EATING... KONOWATA*, I MEAN JEEZ!
Is that stuff even edible?
YOU ORDERED THE KONOWATA, SHIZUO...
I MEAN, LOOK AT YOU! WHAT'S WITH THAT BORING OLD TIE?
...

*Salted sea cucumber guts.


TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR, MAN!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?
SHPOOF
SHPOOF
YOU ARE TOO DARN DRAB! TOO DARN ORDINARY! WHAT'S WITH THIS WHOLE HARDWORKING MIDDLE-AGED JOE SHMOE THING OF YOURS, ANYWAY?!

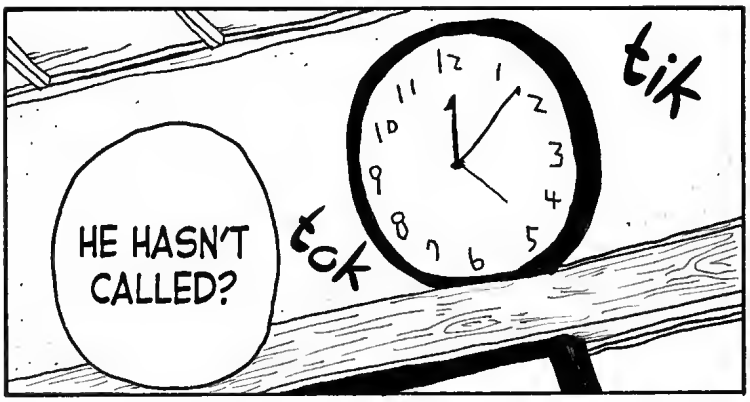

BUT YOU...JEEZ, MIYATA! YOU LOOK LIKE SOMETHING THE CAT DRAGGED IN! YOU GOTTA BE AWARE OF HOW PEOPLE SEE YOU...
...
SEE, A REAL MAN ISN'T ONLY ABOUT WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE, MUCH AS THAT COUNTS. YOU GOTTA LOOK GOOD TOO.

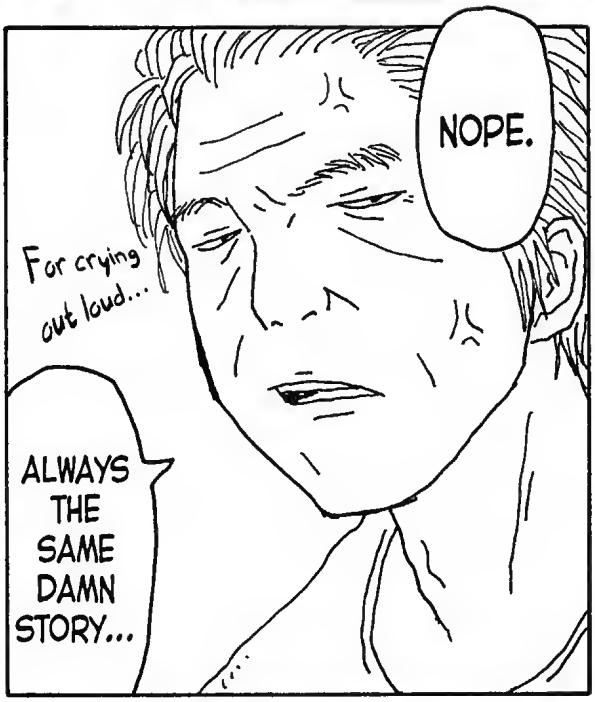
YOU WANT GIRLS TO DATE YOU, SHIZUO?
OH... SO THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT.
...OR GIRLS WILL NEVER DATE YOU.
Chicks, man!
Hisaya Beer
...
HEY, SHUICHI...
...
chomp
kwush kwush

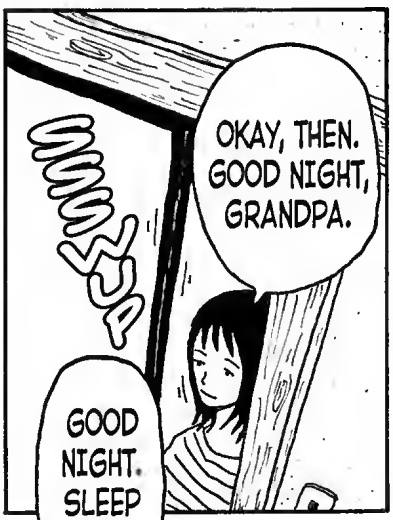

WHAT ABOUT ME?
No good?
Glint
...
...OKAY, I GUESS?
!
Mush mush
What is?

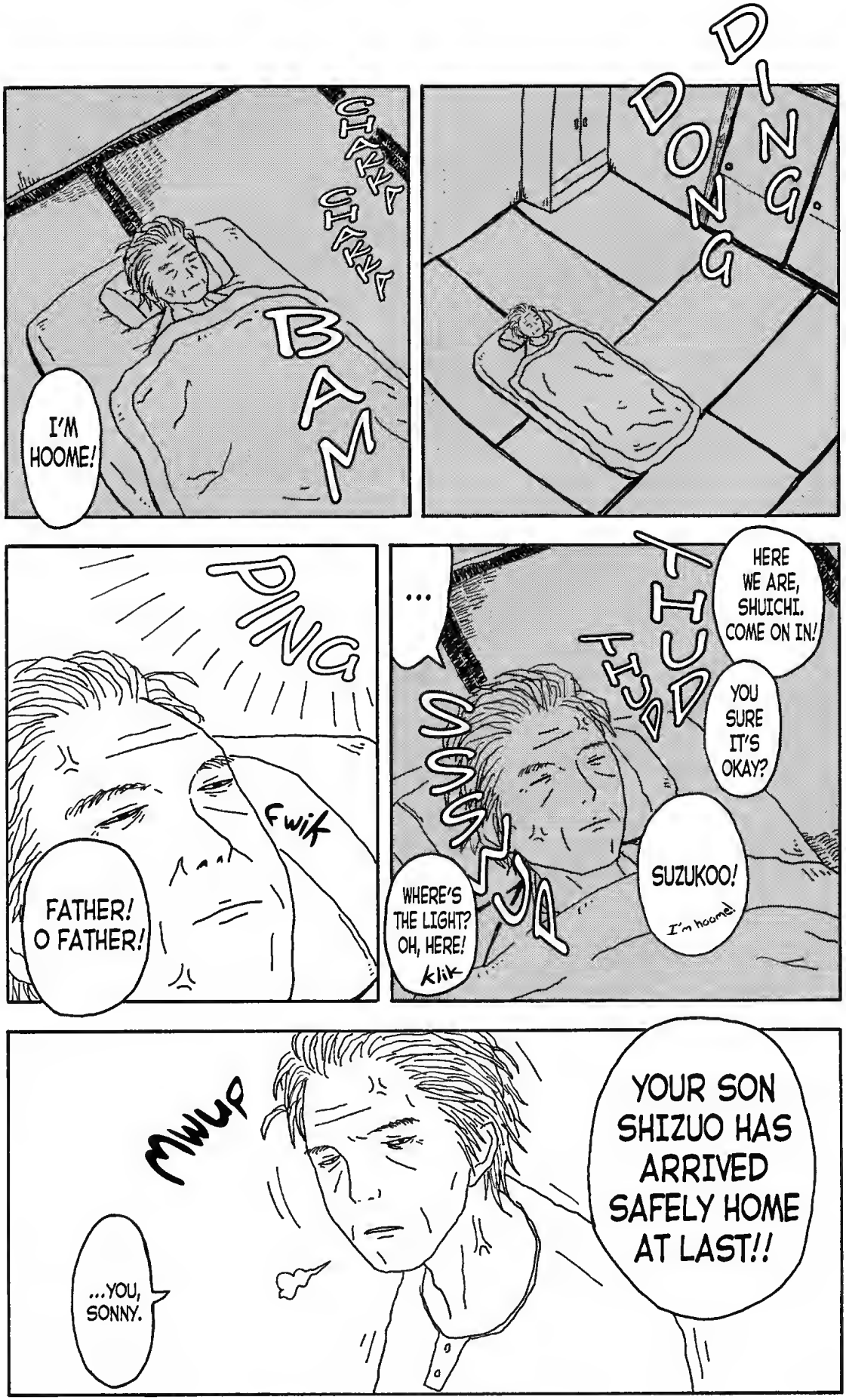
I KNOW! MAYBE I'LL BLEACH MY HAIR BLOND TOO.
As a fashion statement.
WHAT GUYS?
?!
Supercars
Stinky four-eyed walrus.
Stinky four-eyed walrus.
SEE, YOU GET IT. I COULD TELL RIGHT OFF THE BAT THAT YOU WERE DIFFERENT, SHUICHI. THE MOMENT I MET YOU.
YOU'RE NOTHING LIKE THOSE GUYS...
He's totally gross.
Eeuw, he's looking at us again.
DON'T GET TOO CARRIED AWAY, SHIZUO.
YO!
MIYATA!
GOLD
IF YOU DO THAT, THERE'LL BE NO GOING BACK...
...
Gar Har Har
...
Har
MIYATA, BUDDY. A REAL MAN ONLY MOVES FORWARD, ONWARD AND UPWARD!
tuno tuno
...
RIGHT, SHUICHI?!
I GUESS...
Supercars

...
dip
THANK YOU FOR DINNER...
THANK YOU FOR DINNER.
dip
Supercars
WELL THEN, ICHINOSAWA-KUN. SEE YOU AROUND.
I live that way, so bye.
YEAH. Thank you again.
Be careful walking home!
Tone it down.
...
SHIZUO... HM. YOU TAKE CARE, BUDDY.
I WILL! AND I REALLY APPRECIATE THIS, I DO!

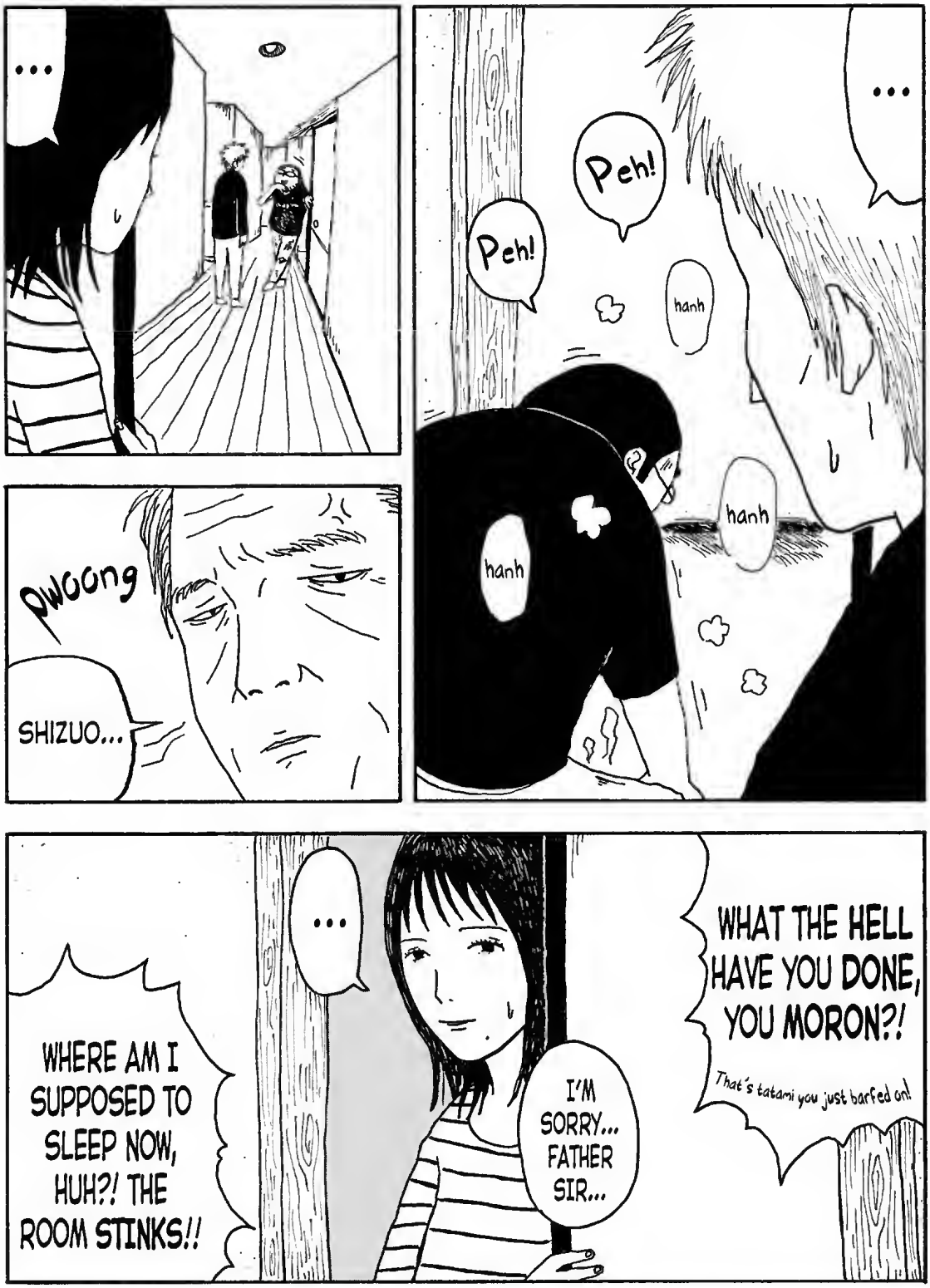


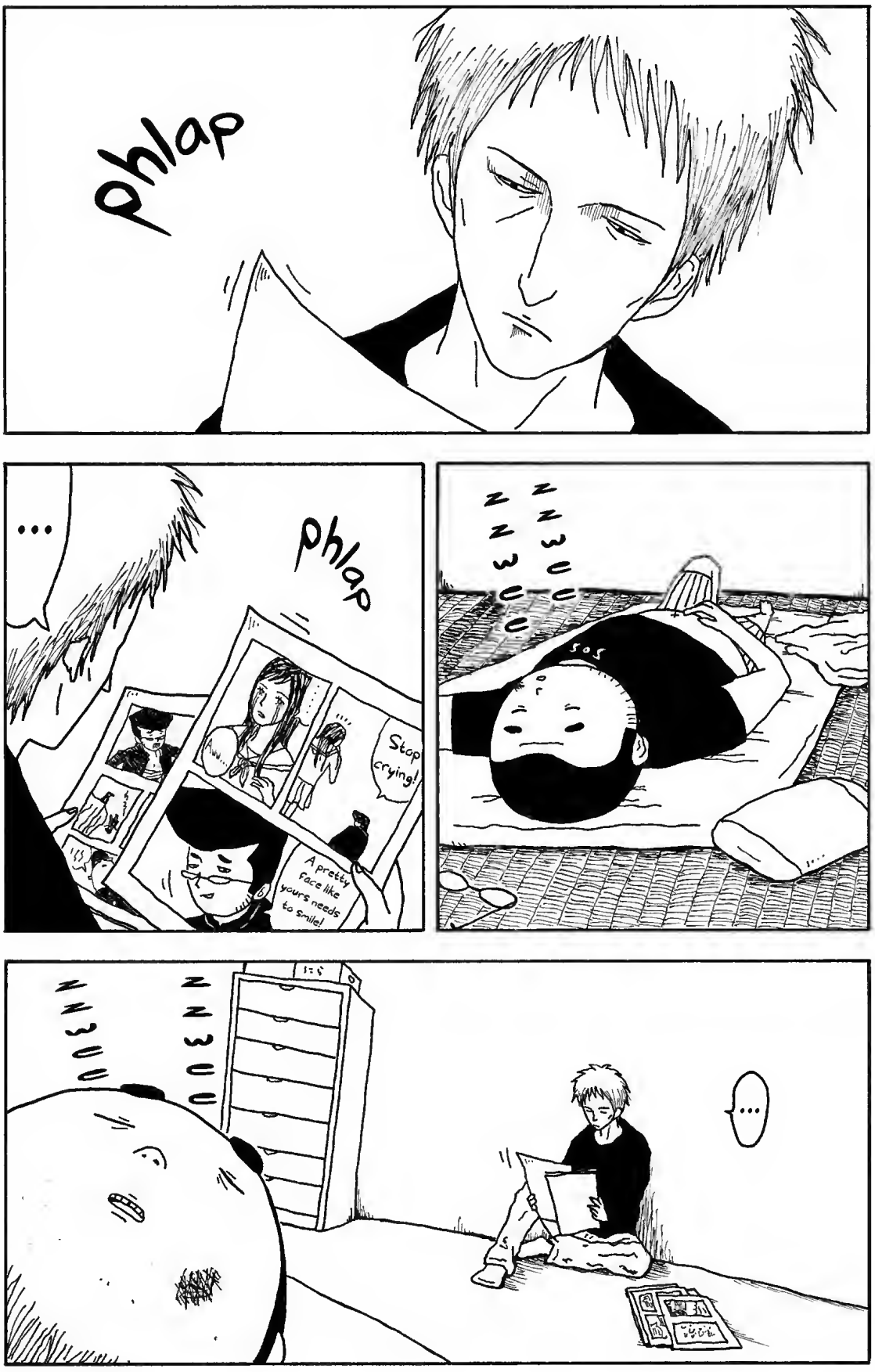


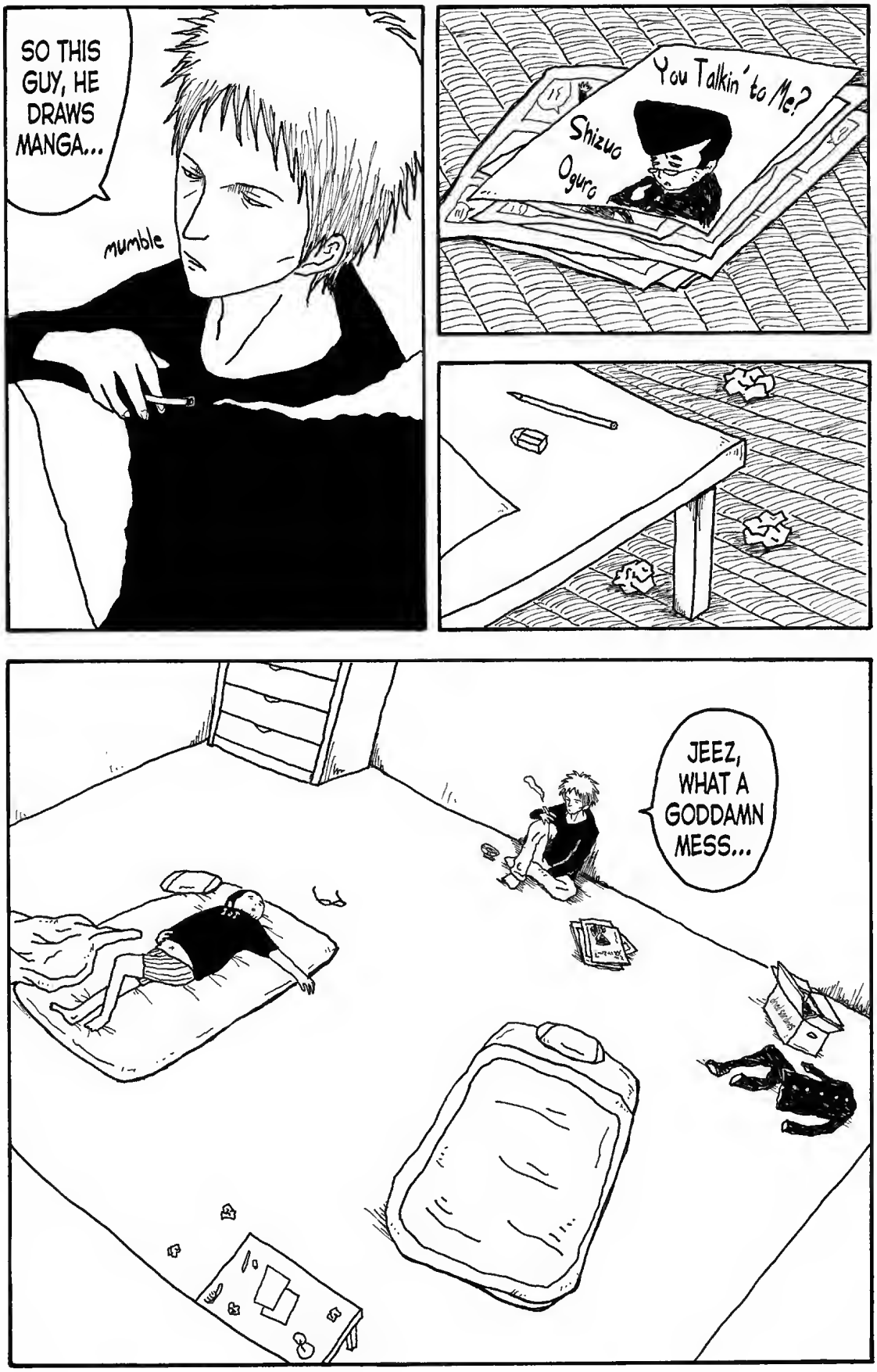

OKAY, THEN. GOOD NIGHT, GRANDPA.
SUUU


CHAKKA CHAKKA
BAM
I'M HOOME!
DING. DONG
PING
FWIK
FATHER! O FATHER!
...
THUD
HIJO
SSSSUQ
WHERE'S THE LIGHT? OH, HERE!
klik
HERE WE ARE, SHUICHI. COME ON IN!
YOU SURE IT'S OKAY?
SUZUKOO! I'm hoome!
MWUP
...YOU, SONNY.
YOUR SON SHIZUO HAS ARRIVED SAFELY HOME AT LAST!!

BWAAAAARGH!!
?!
plash
plash
plash
plash
UNGH, BWARGH, BWOORGH!!

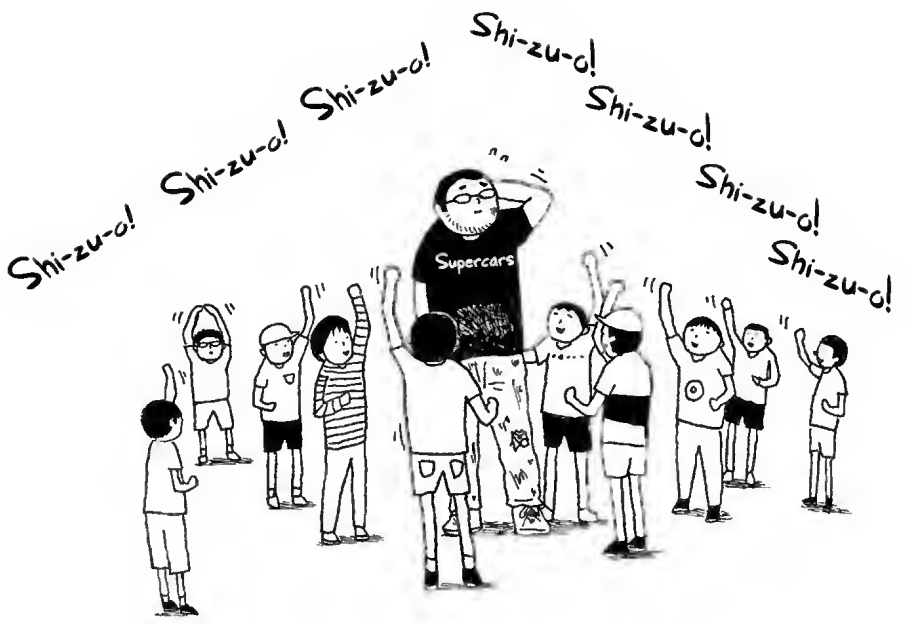

...
Peh!
Peh!
hanh
hanh
hanh
...
pwoong
SHIZUO...
WHERE AM I SUPPOSED TO SLEEP NOW, HUH?! THE ROOM STINKS!!
...
I'M SORRY... FATHER SIR...
WHAT THE HELL HAVE YOU DONE, YOU MORON?!
That's tatami you just barfed on!


phlap
...
phlap
Stop crying!
A pretty face like yours needs to smile!
ZZZZZZZZ
SOS
...


SO THIS GUY, HE DRAWS MANGA...
mumble
You Talkin' to Me?
Shizuo
Oguro
JEEZ, WHAT A GODDAMN MESS...

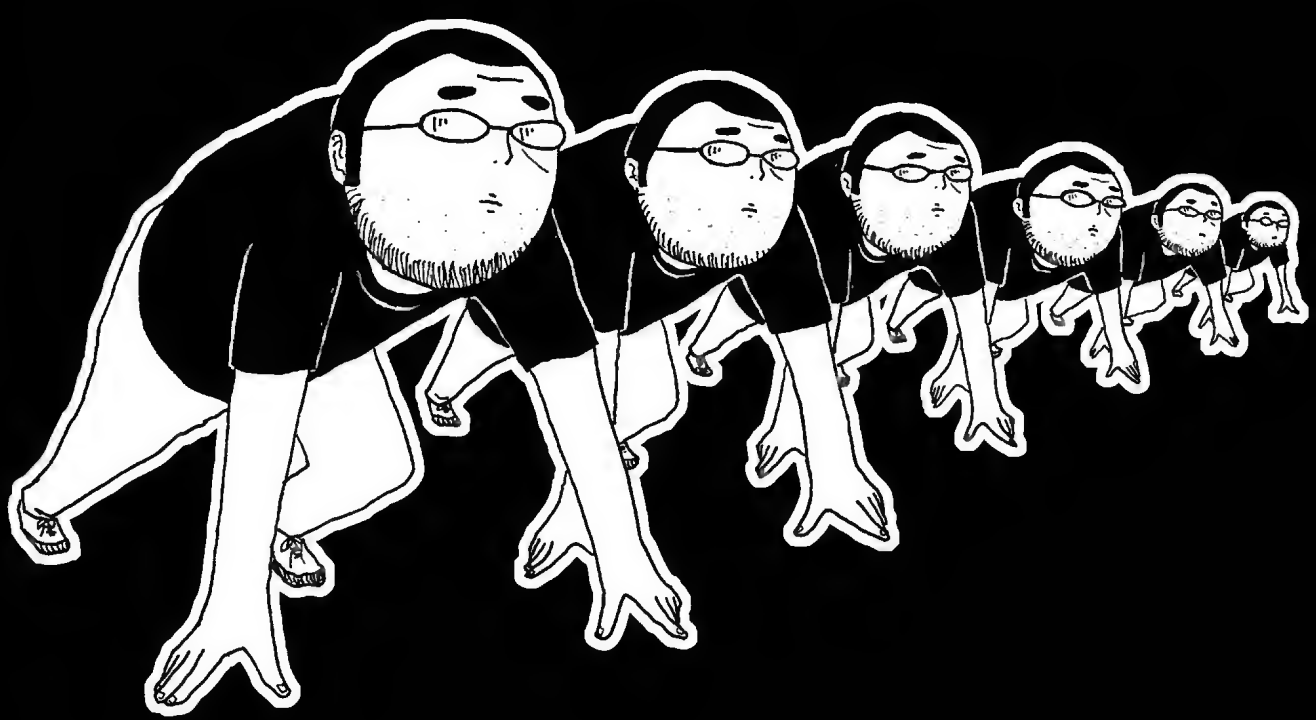
Errrrrt
...
SOS
MAN, DOES THAT STINK...
A
B

Shi-zu-o!
Shi-zu-o!
...

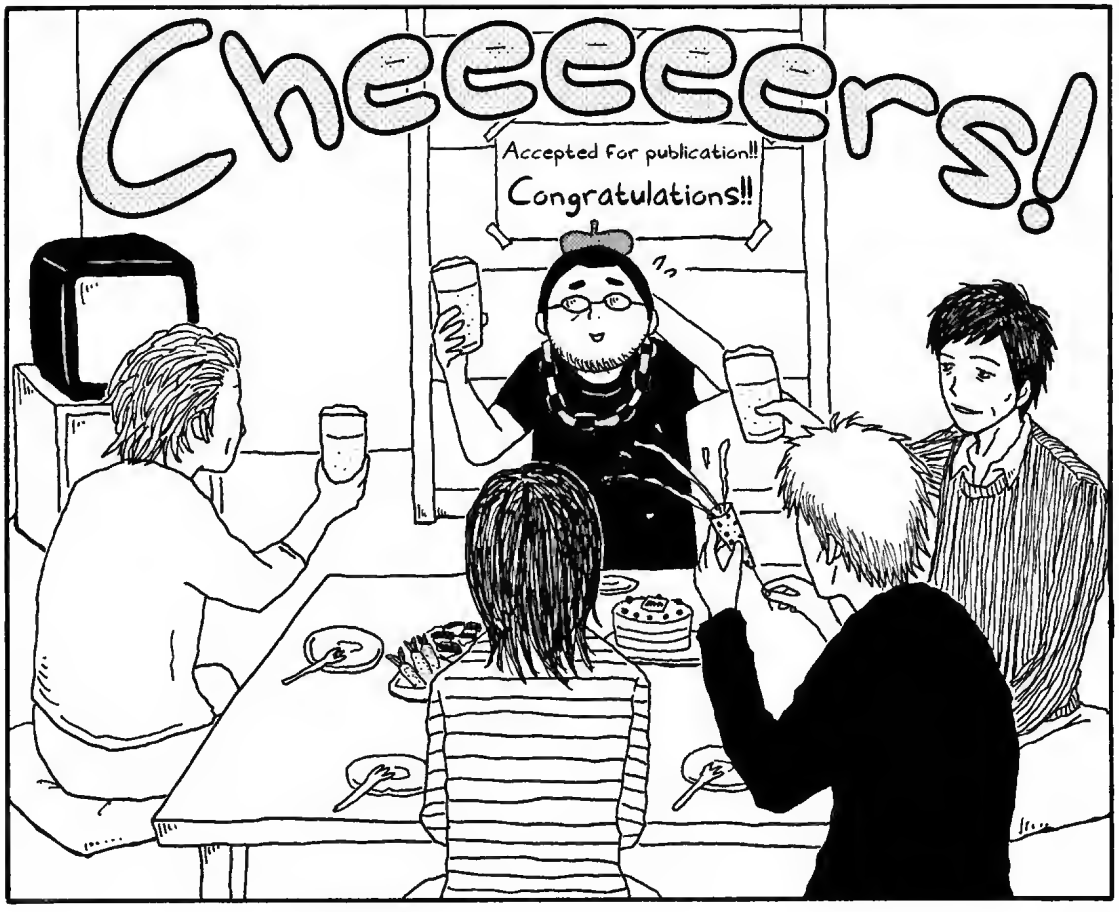

Shi-zu-o!
Shi-zu-o!
Shi-zu-o!
Shi-zu-o!
Shi-zu-o!
Shi-zu-o!
Shi-zu-o!
Supercars

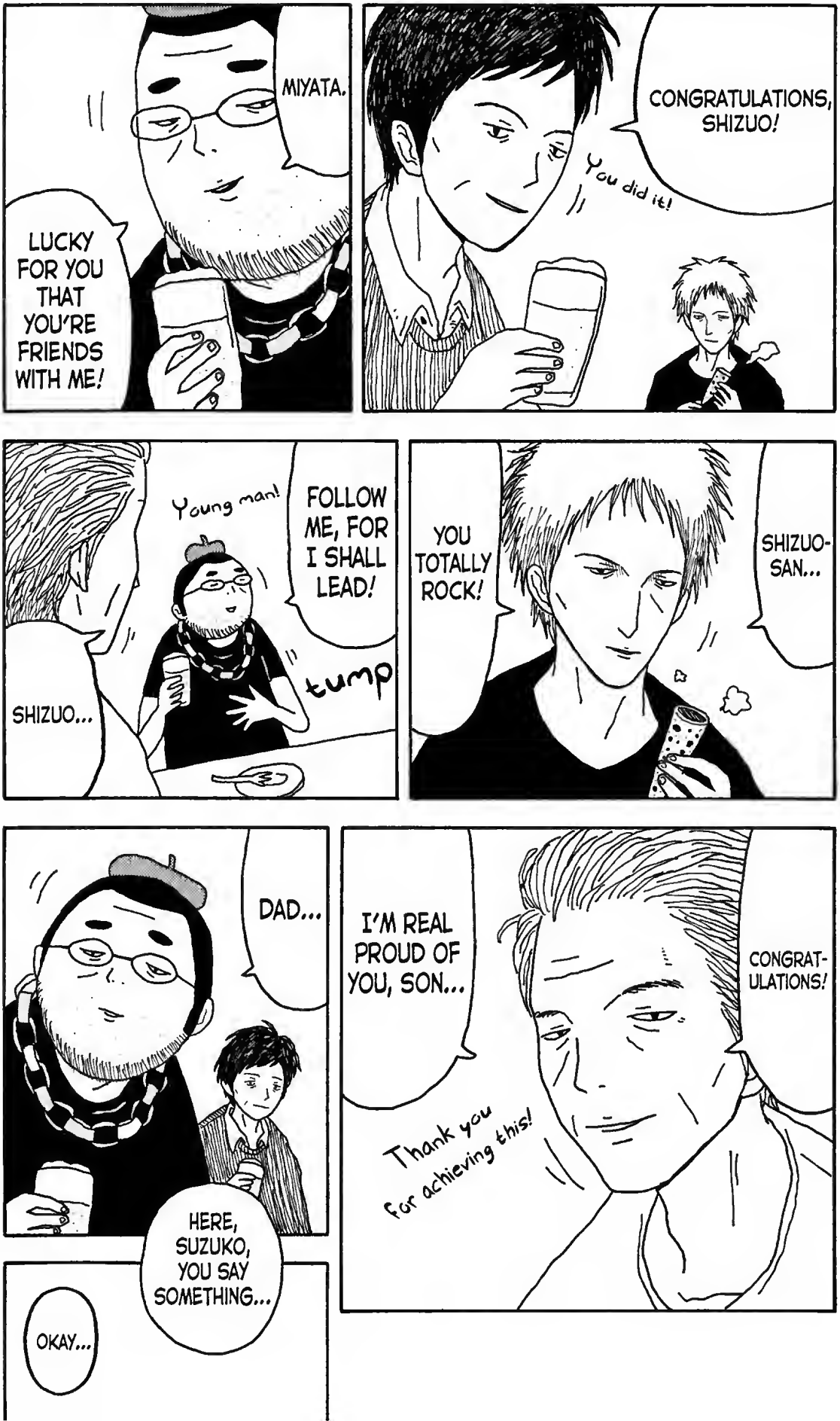
Chapter 3:

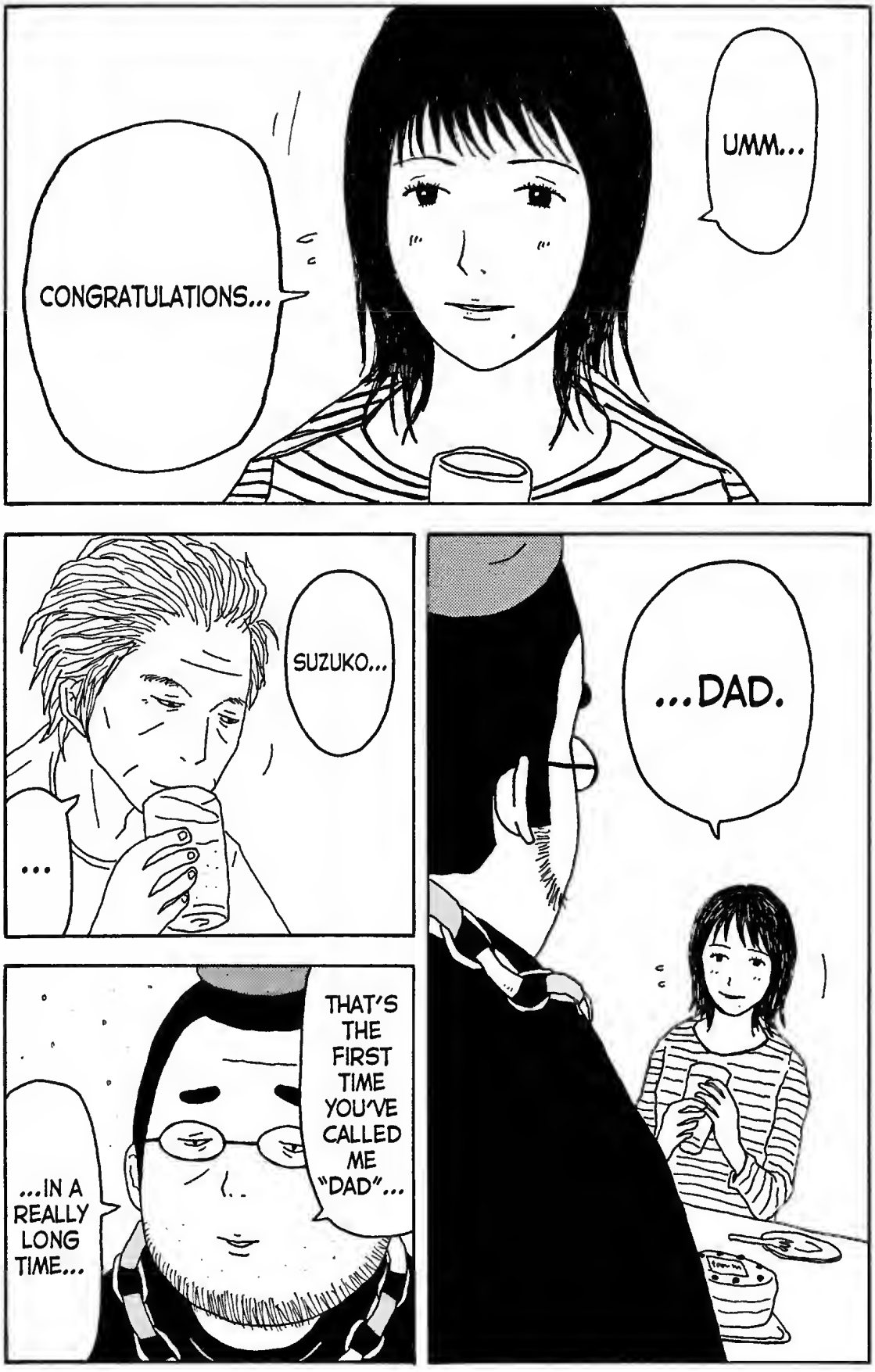
Wrestling with Your Doubts... and Winning



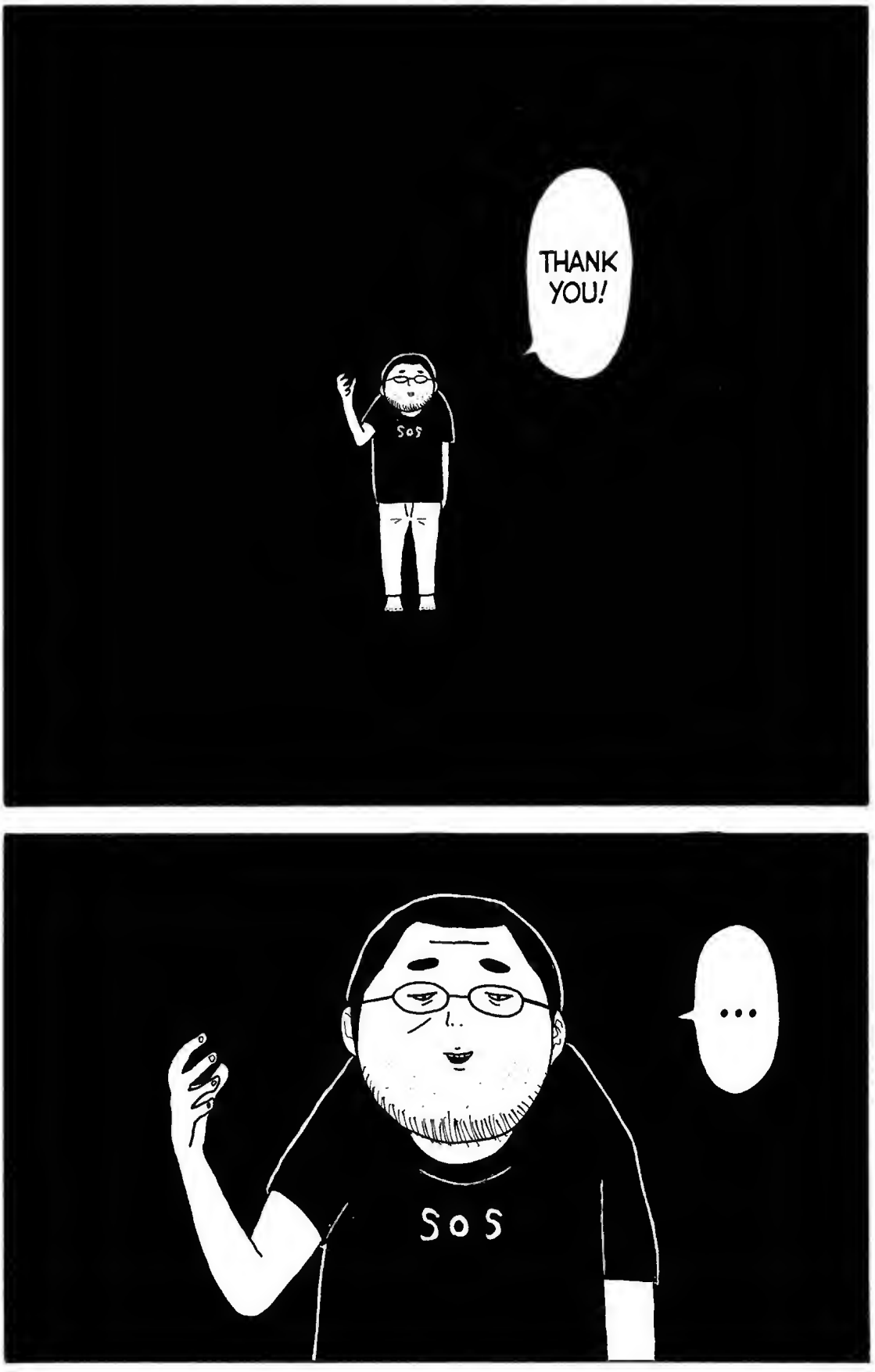
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR UPCOMING DEBUT AS A PROFESSIONAL MANGA ARTIST!!
SHIZUO OGURO SENSEI!


Cheeeeers!
Accepted for publication!!
Congratulations!!


MIYATA.
LUCKY FOR YOU THAT YOU'RE FRIENDS WITH ME!
CONGRATULATIONS, SHIZUO!
You did it!
Young man!
FOLLOW ME, FOR I SHALL LEAD!
tump
SHIZUO...
YOU TOTALLY ROCK!
SHIZUO-SAN...
DAD...
I'M REAL PROUD OF YOU, SON...
CONGRAT-ULATIONS!
Thank you for achieving this!
HERE, SUZUKO, YOU SAY SOMETHING...
OKAY...

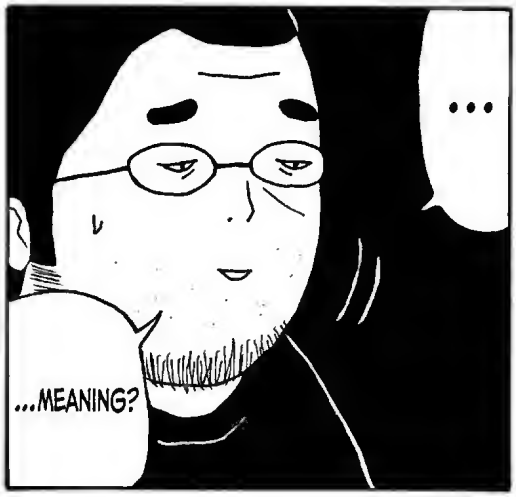

UMM...
CONGRATULATIONS...
...DAD.
SUZUKO...
...
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE CALLED ME "DAD"...
...IN A REALLY LONG TIME...

I... GOSH, I...
swup
SUZUKO...
Karin
Accepted for publication! Congratulations!!
UH-OH...
trickle
trickle
I'M SORRY FOR EVERYTHING I PUT YOU THROUGH... BUT I PROMISE, I'M OKAY NOW!
I KNOW, SUZUKO! BELIEVE ME, I KNOW!
Ahem...
AND, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR SUPPORTING ME SO FAR.
Accepted f
Congra
I PLEDGE NOT TO LET THIS MILESTONE GO TO MY HEAD, BUT TO CONTINUE TO DEVOTE MYSELF TO MY ART.

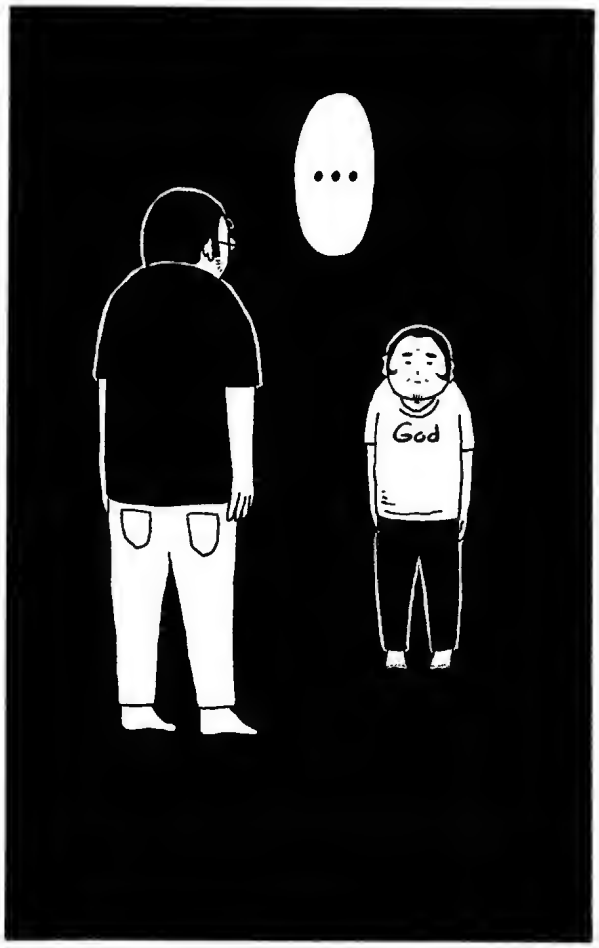

THANK YOU!
SOS
...
SOS

glance
glance
SOS
?
Everybodyyy!
Heeey!
SHIZUO.
HEY, SHIZUO.
AND YOU WOULD BE?!
God
...
Oh lord...
?!
turn

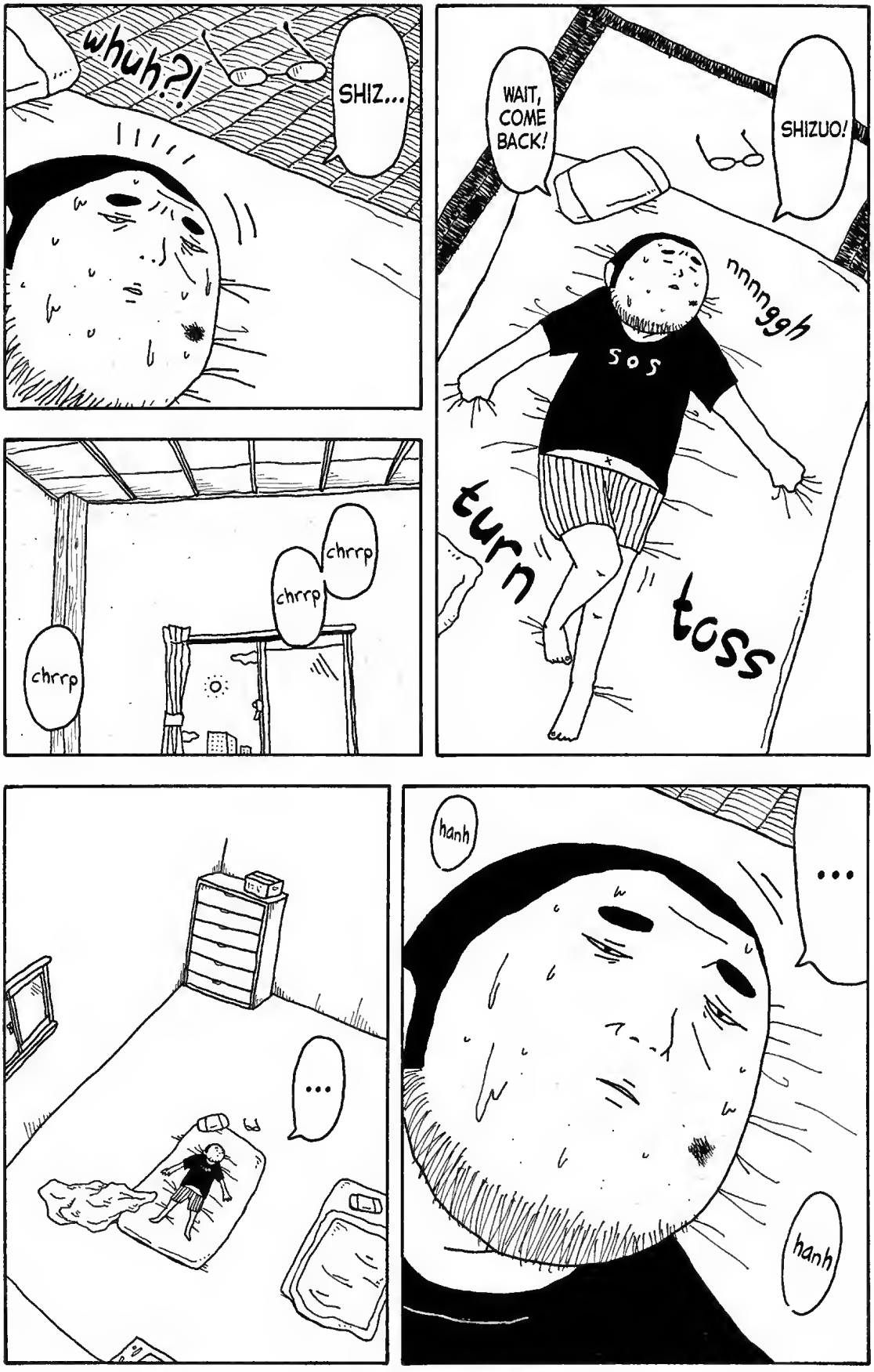
WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO?
God

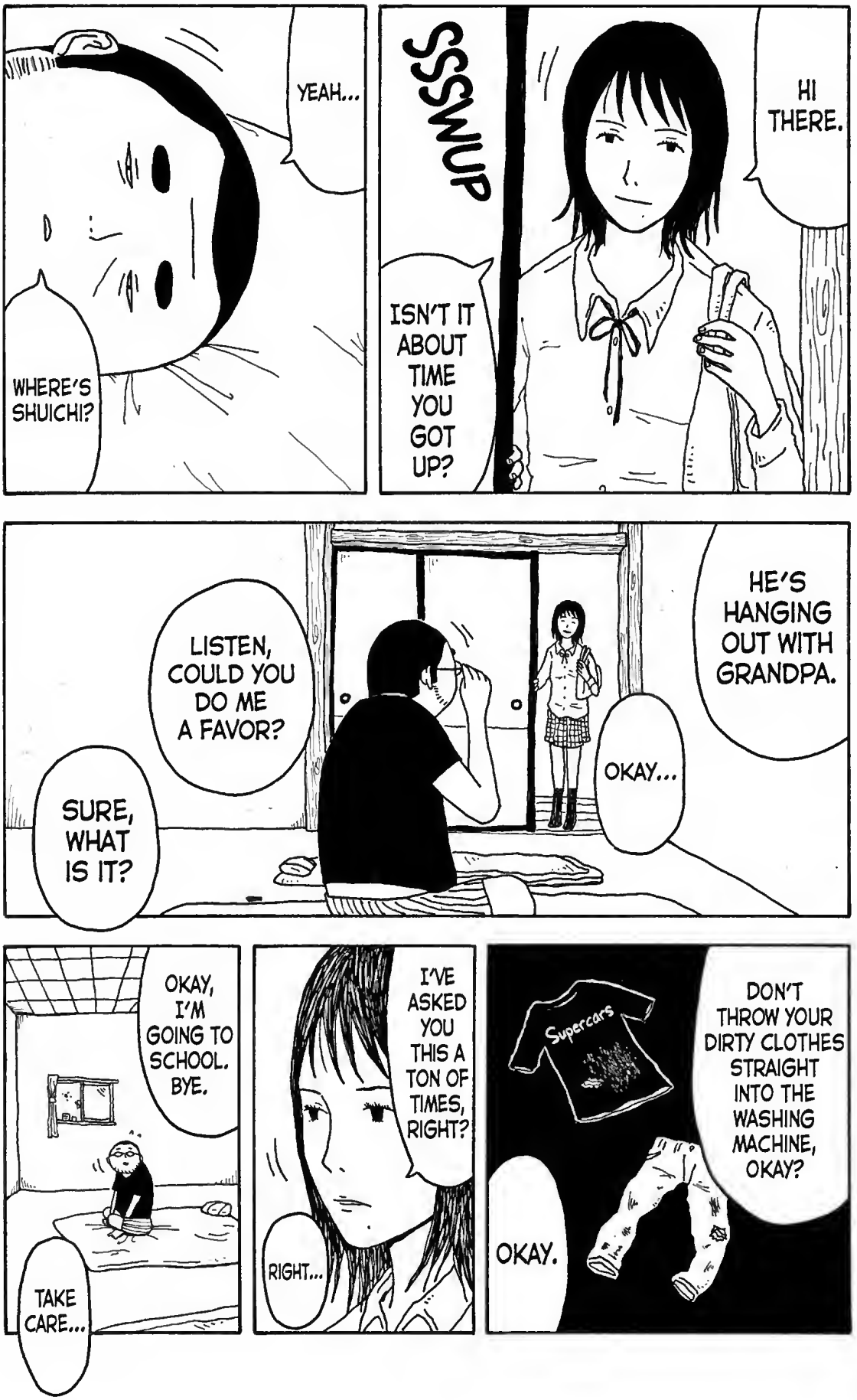

...
...MEANING?

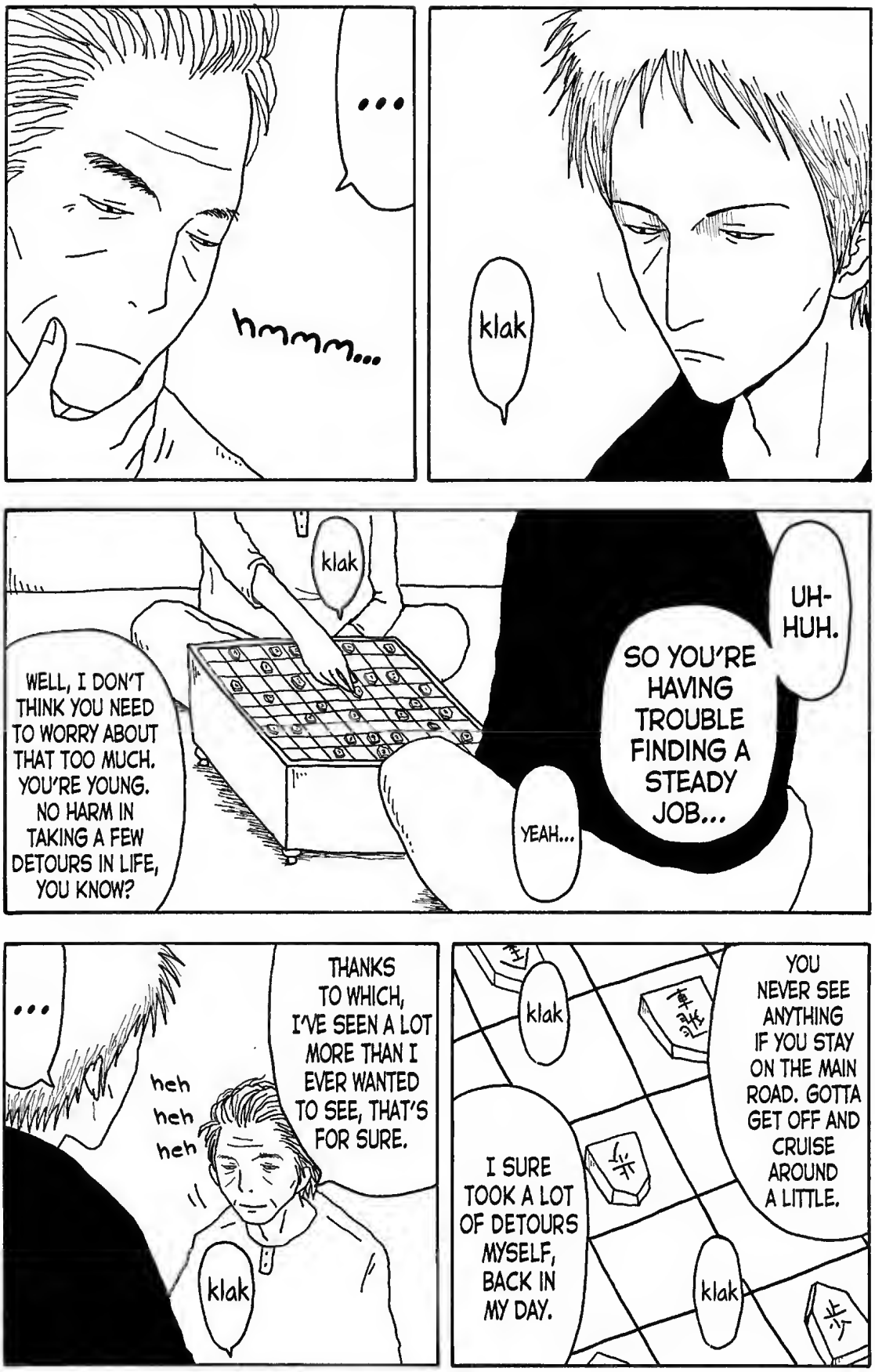
YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, AREN'T YOU?


...
God

SOS
...
...
HM?
ta ta ta ta
HUH?!
SHIZU-
OOO
OOO
OOO
OOO!!
SHIZUO!

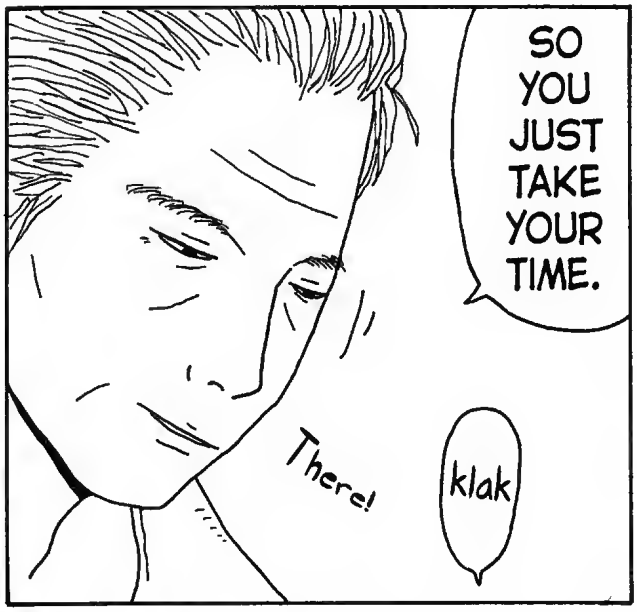

whuh?!
SHIZ...
WAIT, COME BACK!
SHIZUO!
nnnngh
SOS
turn
toss
chrrp
chrrp
chrrp
...
hanh
...
hanh

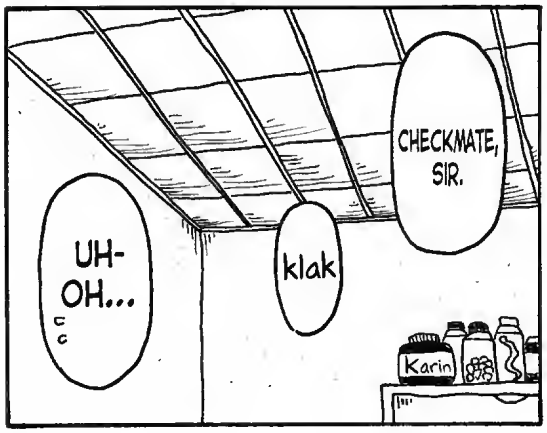

YEAH...
WHERE'S SHUICHI?
SSSWUP
HI THERE.
ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU GOT UP?
HE'S HANGING OUT WITH GRANDPA.
OKAY...
LISTEN, COULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR?
SURE, WHAT IS IT?
OKAY, I'M GOING TO SCHOOL. BYE.
TAKE CARE...
I'VE ASKED YOU THIS A TON OF TIMES, RIGHT?
RIGHT...
Supercars
DON'T THROW YOUR DIRTY CLOTHES STRAIGHT INTO THE WASHING MACHINE, OKAY?
OKAY.

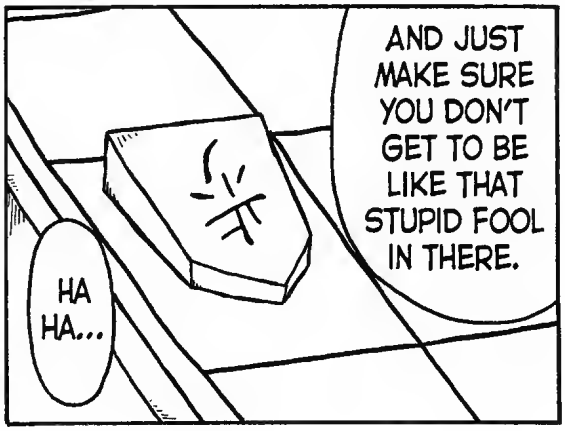

...
hmmm...
klak
klak
WELL, I DON'T THINK YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT TOO MUCH. YOU'RE YOUNG. NO HARM IN TAKING A FEW DETOURS IN LIFE, YOU KNOW?
SO YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE FINDING A STEADY JOB...
UH-HUH.
YEAH...
...
heh heh heh
THANKS TO WHICH, I'VE SEEN A LOT MORE THAN I EVER WANTED TO SEE, THAT'S FOR SURE.
klak
I SURE TOOK A LOT OF DETOURS MYSELF, BACK IN MY DAY.
klak
YOU NEVER SEE ANYTHING IF YOU STAY ON THE MAIN ROAD. GOTTA GET OFF AND CRUISE AROUND A LITTLE.
klak

Karin
klak
klak
YOU MAKE A DECISION UNDER PRESSURE, IT HARDLY EVER TURNS OUT TO BE A GOOD ONE ANYWAY.
...
WELL, ANYWAY. NO NEED TO GET STRESSED OUT. YOU GOT TIME.

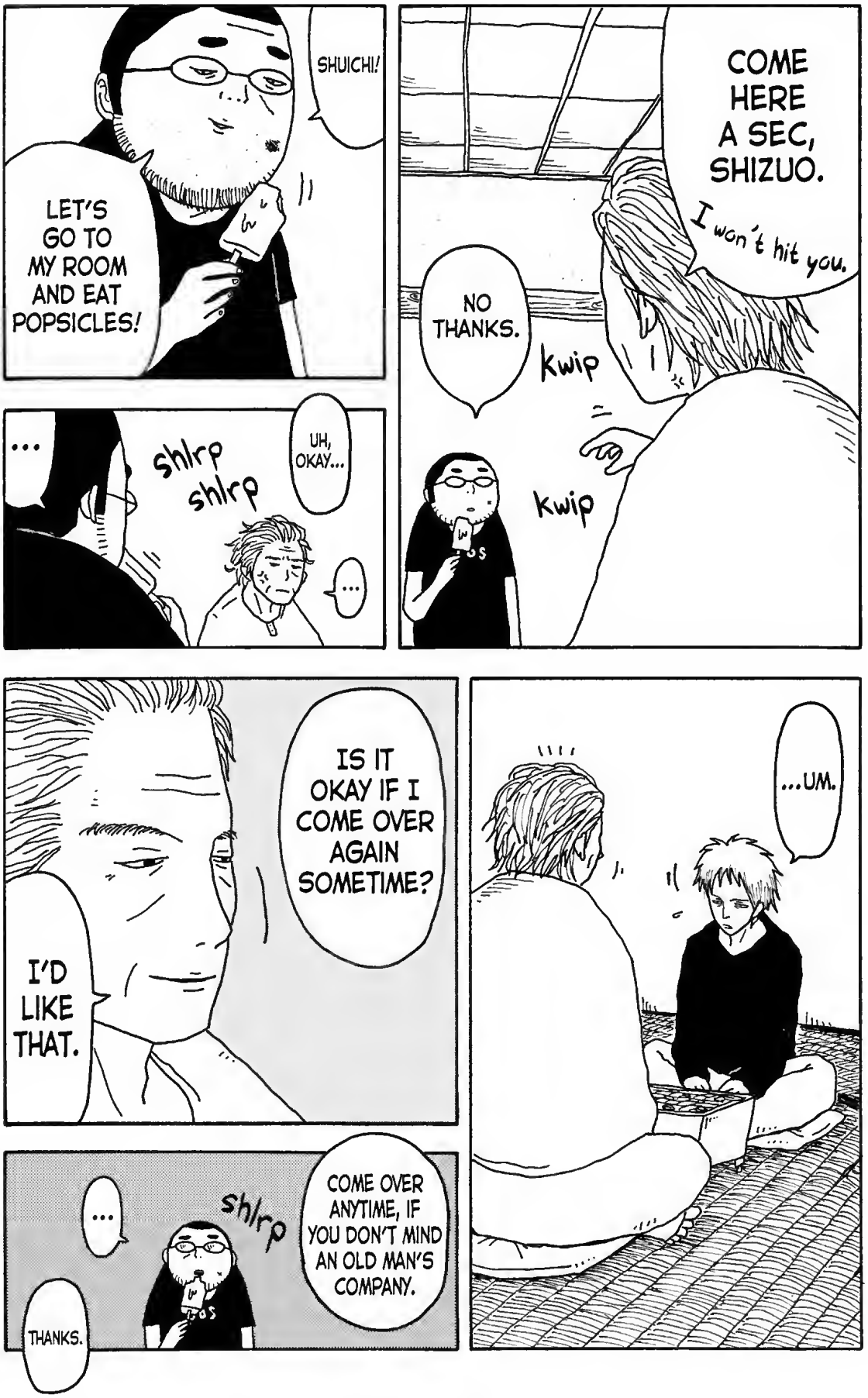
...OKAY.

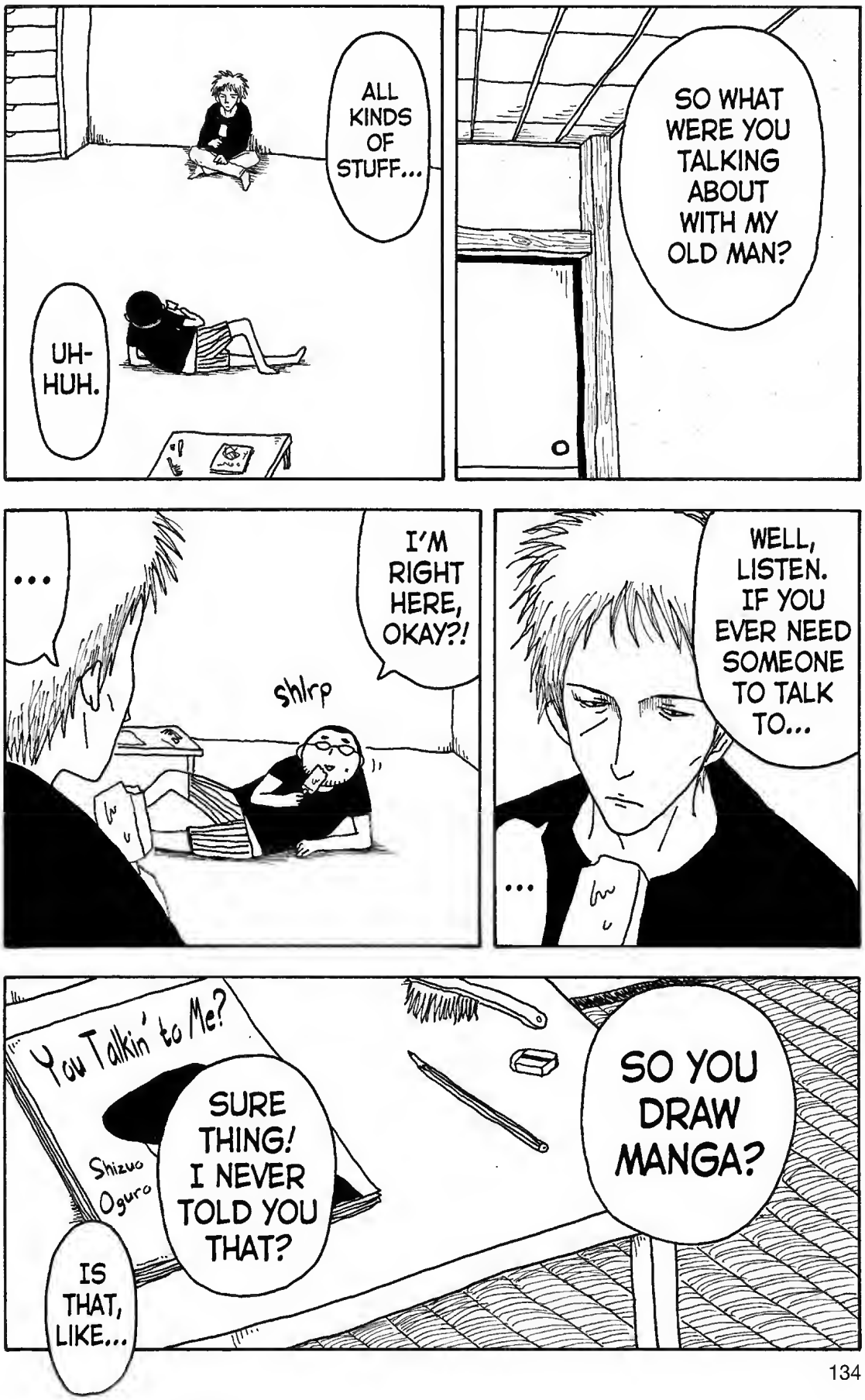

SO YOU JUST TAKE YOUR TIME.
There!
klak

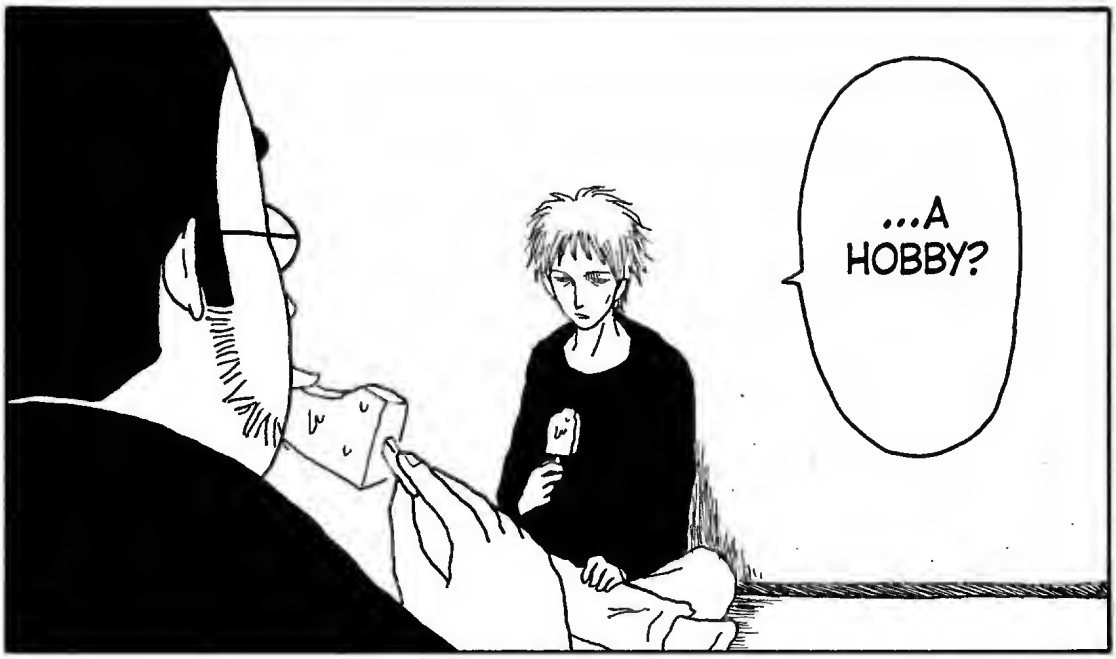

UH-OH...
klak
CHECKMATE, SIR.
Karin

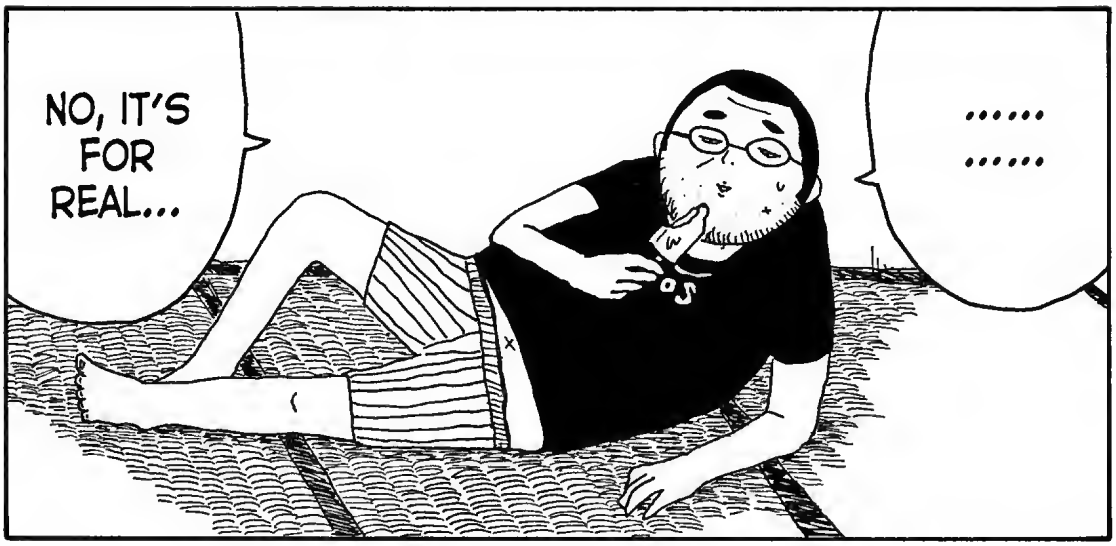

HA HA...
AND JUST MAKE SURE YOU DON'T GET TO BE LIKE THAT STUPID FOOL IN THERE.

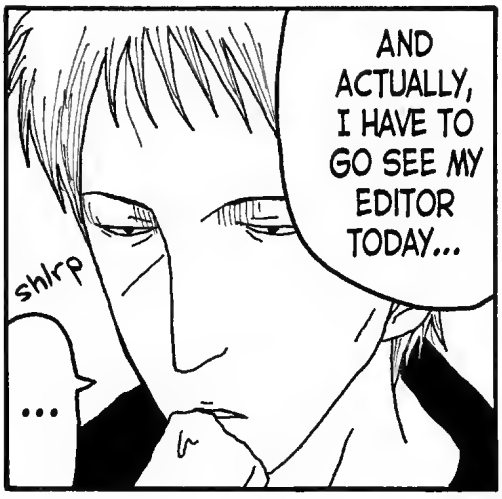
WHO'D YOU MEAN BY "STUPID FOOL"?
...
sh/rp
YOU, WHO ELSE?
...
WELL, YOU FATHERED THE STUPID FOOL, SO YOU'RE A STUPID FOOL TOO, DAD.
THAT MAKES TWO OF US.
So there.

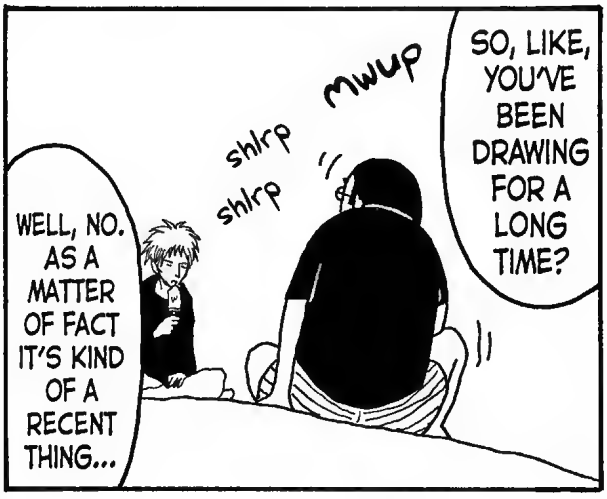

SHUICHI!
LET'S GO TO MY ROOM AND EAT POPSICLES!
COME HERE A SEC, SHIZUO.
I won't hit you.
NO THANKS.
kwip
kwip
...
shlrp shlrp
UH, OKAY...
...
IS IT OKAY IF I COME OVER AGAIN SOMETIME?
I'D LIKE THAT.
...UM.
...
shlrp
COME OVER ANYTIME, IF YOU DON'T MIND AN OLD MAN'S COMPANY.
THANKS.

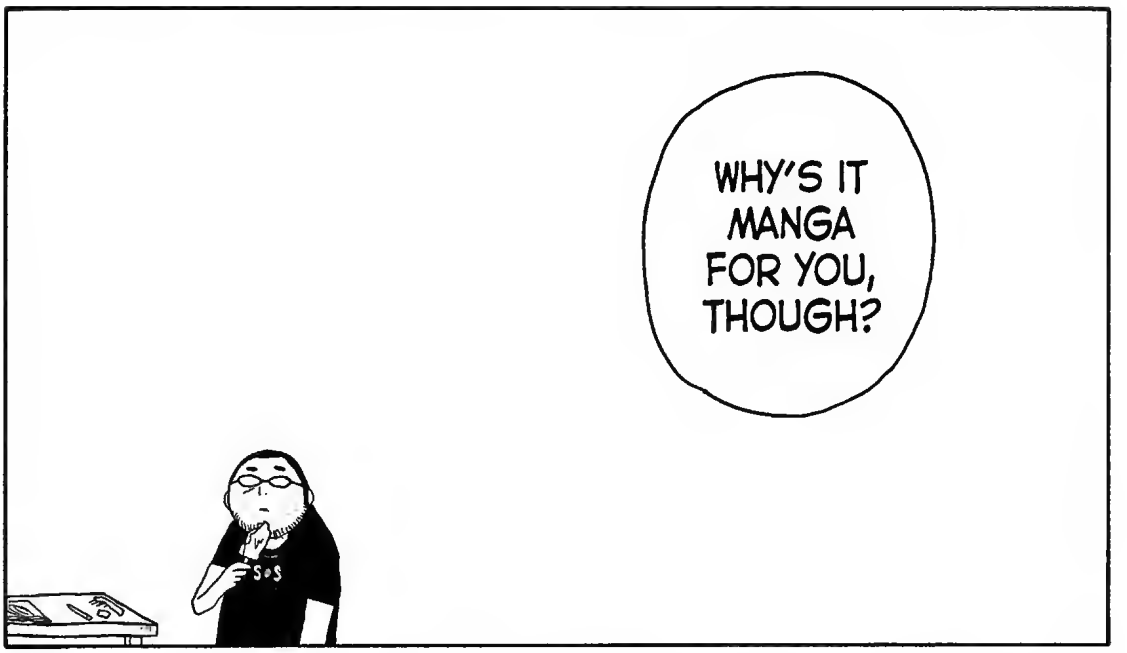

ALL KINDS OF STUFF...
UH-HUH.
SO WHAT WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT WITH MY OLD MAN?
...
I'M RIGHT HERE, OKAY?!
shlrp
WELL, LISTEN. IF YOU EVER NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO...
...
You Talkin' to Me?
Shizuo Oguro
SURE THING! I NEVER TOLD YOU THAT?
IS THAT, LIKE...
SO YOU DRAW MANGA?


...A HOBBY?

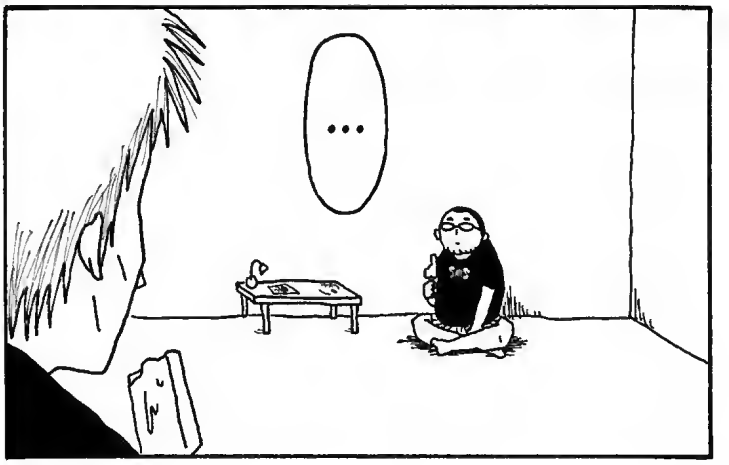

NO, IT'S FOR REAL...
.....
.....


AND ACTUALLY, I HAVE TO GO SEE MY EDITOR TODAY...
shlrp
...

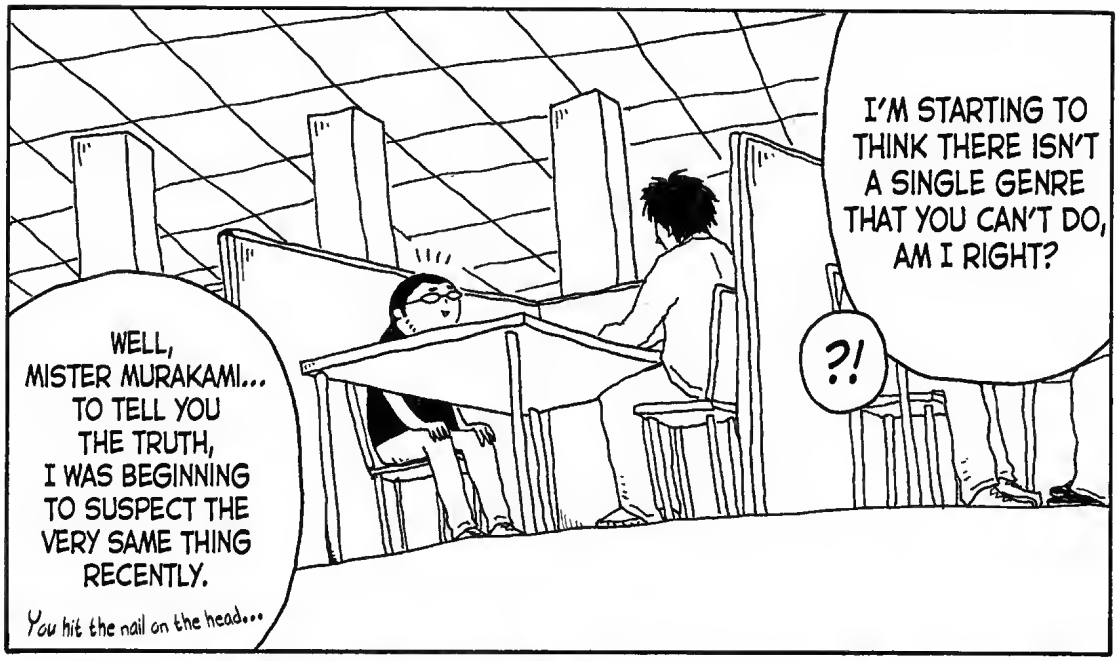

SO, LIKE, YOU'VE BEEN DRAWING FOR A LONG TIME?
mwup
shlrp
shlrp
WELL, NO. AS A MATTER OF FACT IT'S KIND OF A RECENT THING...



Why is it manga for me?



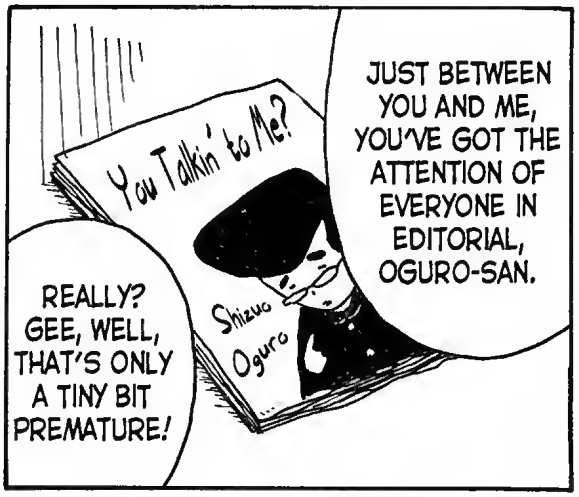
phlap
Hey! You okay?
kaw
kaw
CHU
GAKU
KAN
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING, OGURO-SAN...
CAN I GIVE YOU MY HONEST OPINION?
YES...
AND NOW YOU BRING ME A JUVENILE DELINQUENT STORY...
...
OGURO-SAN...
Professor Diablo's Failed Experiment
Shizuo Oguro
THE TIME BEFORE LAST WAS A HORROR MANGA...
Nothing But Home Runs
THEN LAST TIME WAS A SPORTS MANGA...


I'M STARTING TO THINK THERE ISN'T A SINGLE GENRE THAT YOU CAN'T DO, AM I RIGHT?
?!
WELL, MISTER MURAKAMI... TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I WAS BEGINNING TO SUSPECT THE VERY SAME THING RECENTLY.
You hit the nail on the head...

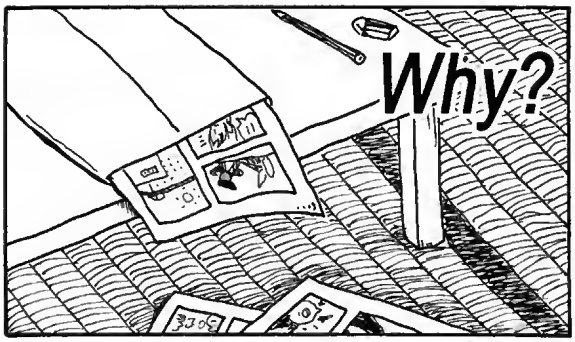
AND I'LL BE UNSTOPPABLE.
I agree!

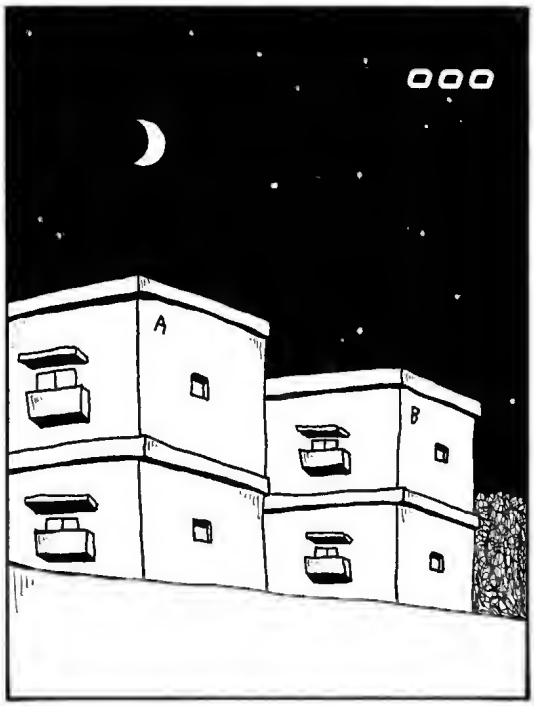
SO NOW, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FIND THE RIGHT SUBJECT MATTER...
Ekke

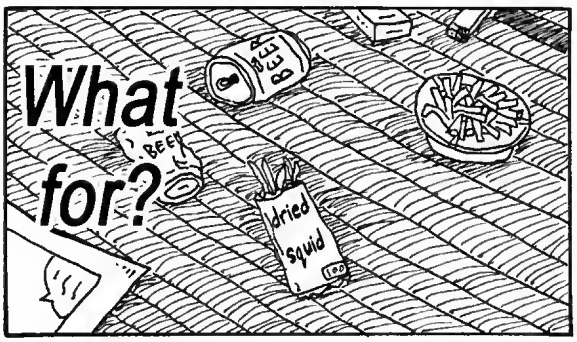
gar
Ekke Editorial
har
har
har
It's HIM AGAIN...
He's HERE AGAIN...

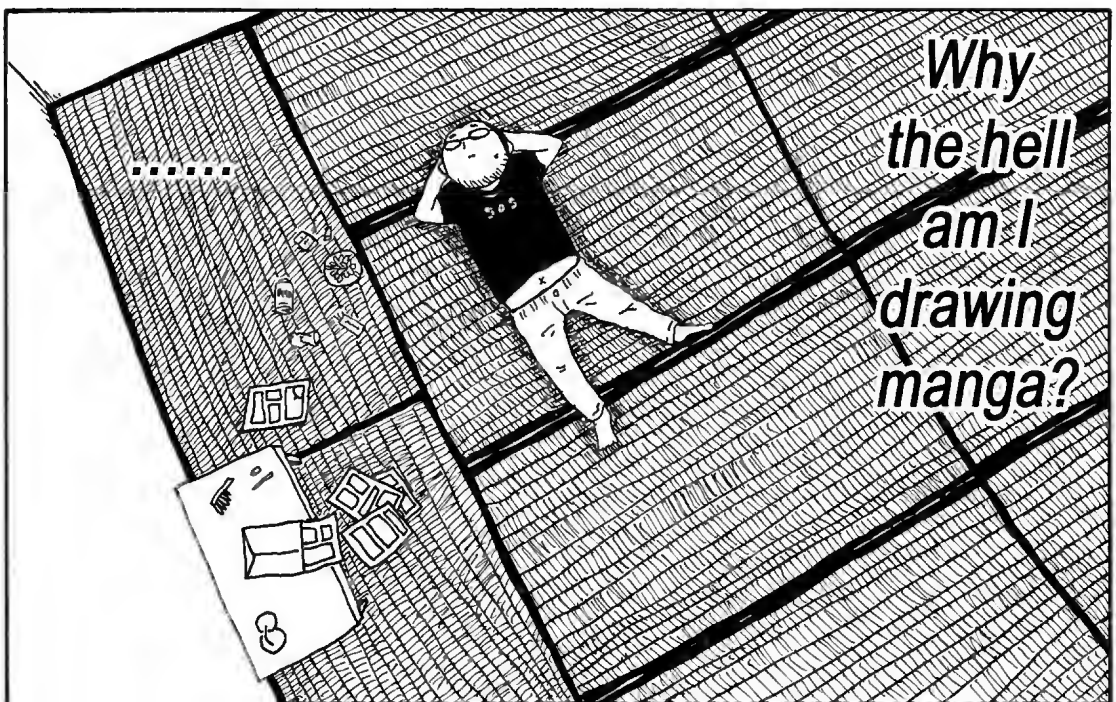

You Talkin' to Me?
Shizuo Oguro
JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME, YOU'VE GOT THE ATTENTION OF EVERYONE IN EDITORIAL, OGURO-SAN.
REALLY? GEE, WELL, THAT'S ONLY A TINY BIT PREMATURE!

ALL RIGHT, SO LET'S CONTINUE GIVING OUR ALL TO GETTING YOU PUBLISHED!
YES, SIR!


Why?


A
B


What for?
BEER
dried squid


Why the hell am I drawing manga?

WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO?
God
SOS
YOU THINK IT'S FINE TO JUST KEEP TRYING TO BECOME A MANGA ARTIST?
ABOUT THE FUTURE.
God
ABOUT WHAT?
...
SOS
I GET THE FEELING THAT THE MORE YOU DRAW, THE FURTHER YOU'RE GETTING FROM WHERE YOU WANTED TO GO...
...
mwup
IS YOUR GOAL EVEN IN SIGHT ANYMORE?

SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?!
IF YOU KEEP GOING LIKE THIS, EVERYONE'S GOING TO GIVE UP ON YOU, YOU KNOW THAT?
God
HEY, DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON ME, ALL RIGHT? COME ON, LET'S CALM DOWN.
Okay?
tump
...
YOU FIGURE IT OUT, IF YOU'RE SO SMART! JEEZ, YOU'RE USELESS...
HOW ABOUT GIVING ME SOME IDEAS?!
?!
kaTHUNK
shwup
Smile
klap

gwumph...
God
tmp
tmp
DON'T TOUCH ME, DUDE...
...

SOS
COME OOOONNN!!

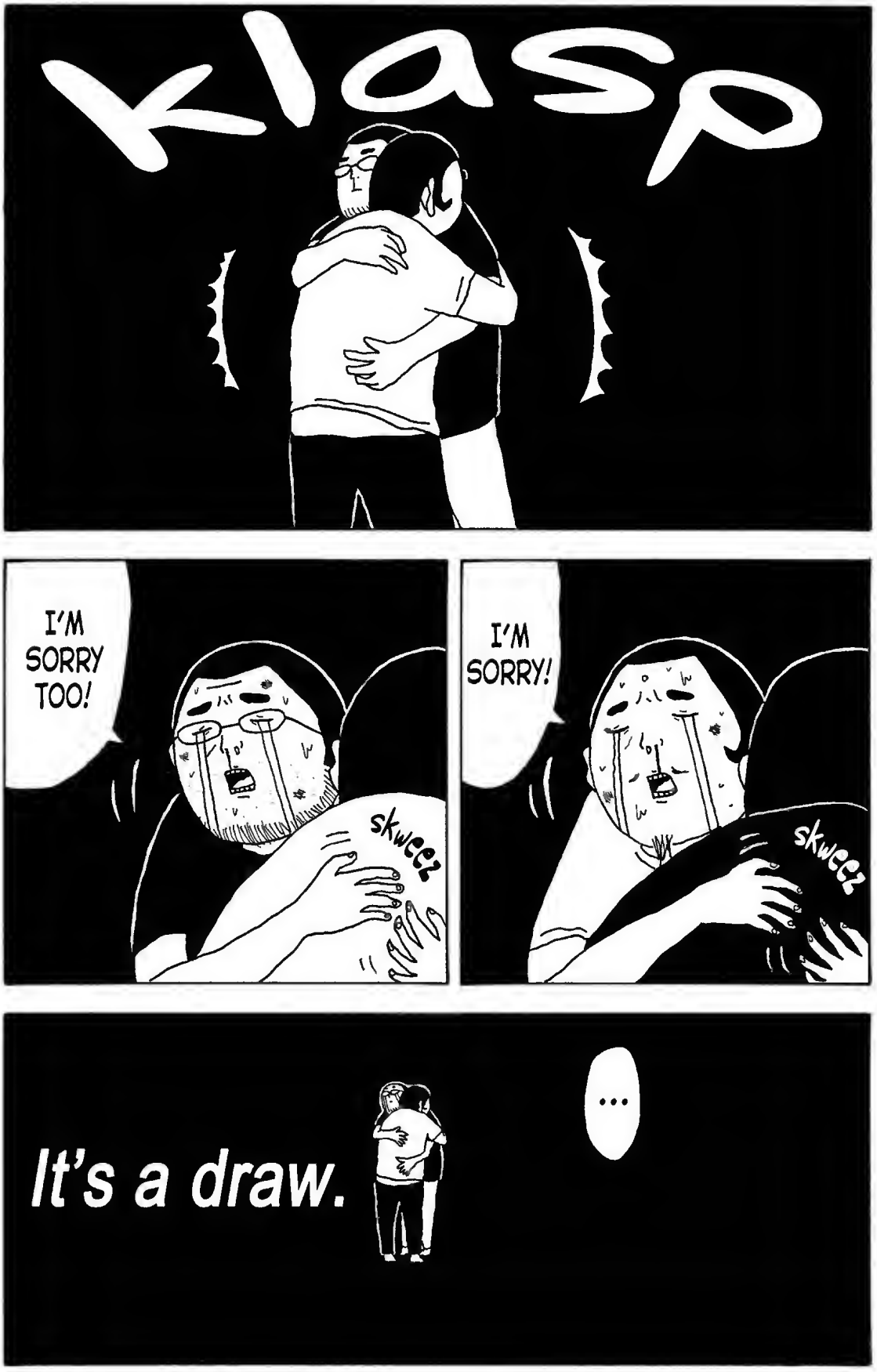
mwup
YOU LOOKIN' FOR A FIGHT?

hanh
hanh
hanh

Pow
Pow
Pow
Pow

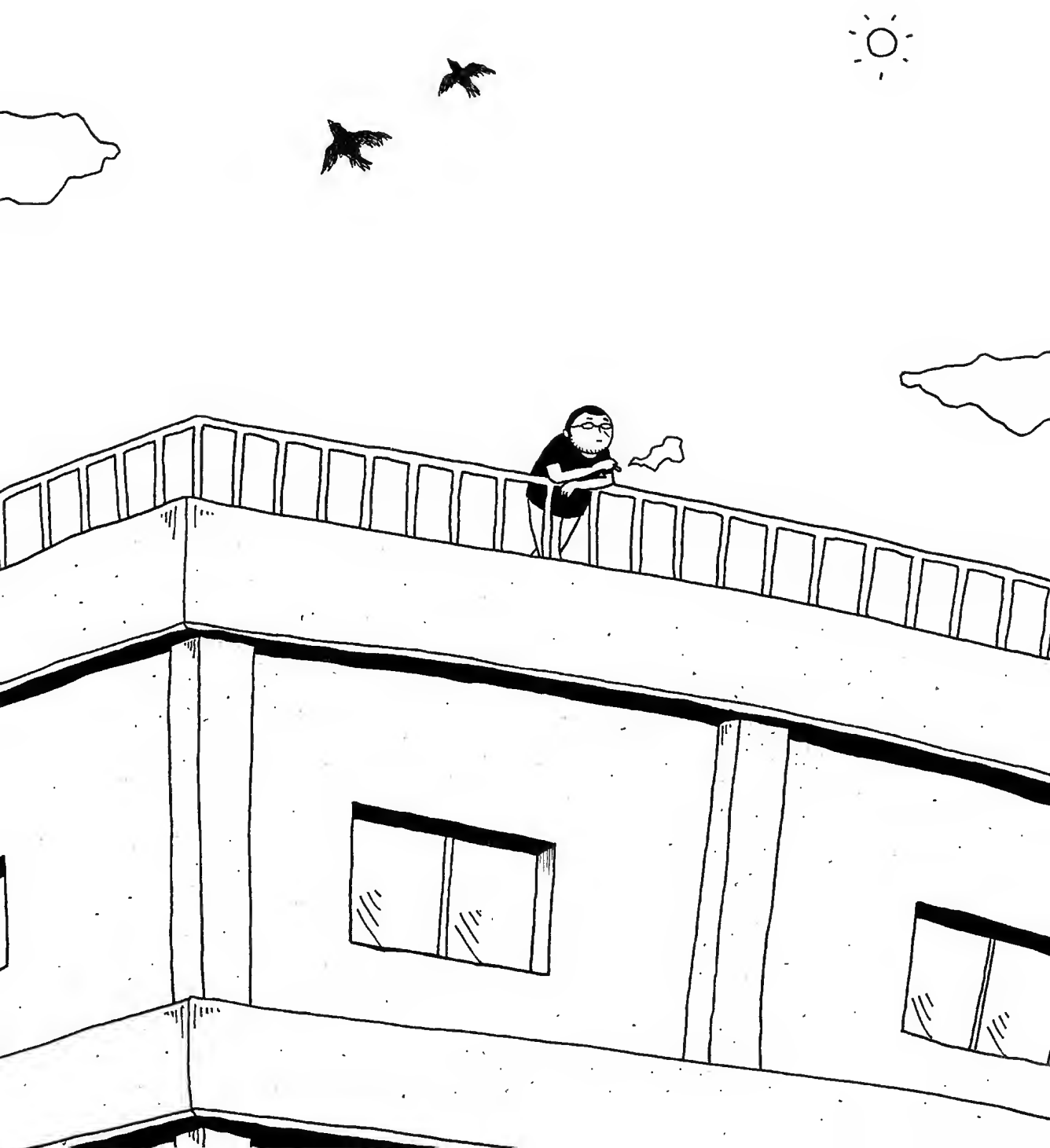
klutch
klutch

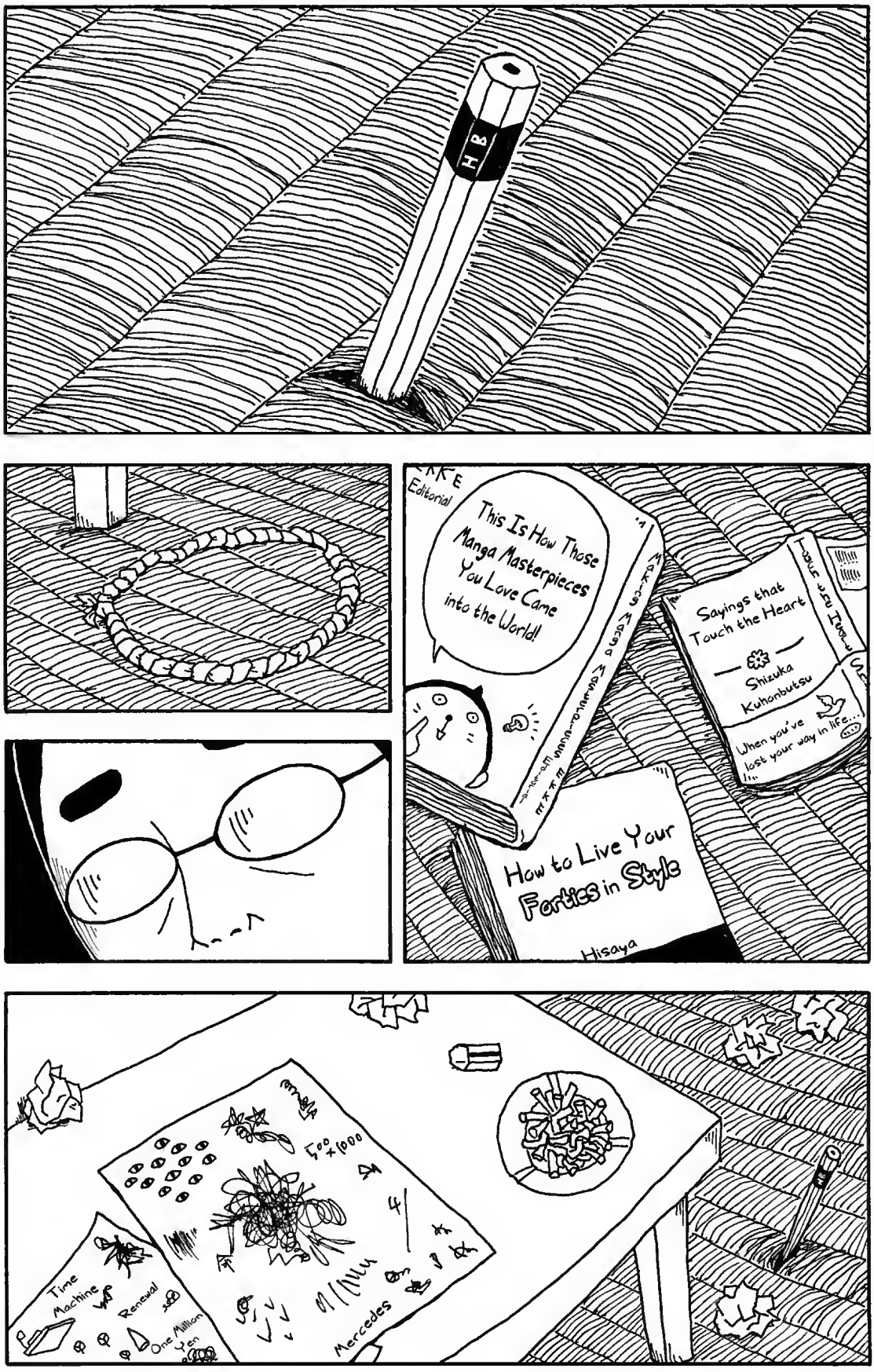
shwap
shwap
WE AIN'T DONE YET...
mwup
mwup
gworrrp
hanh
hanh
...
hff
...
hff

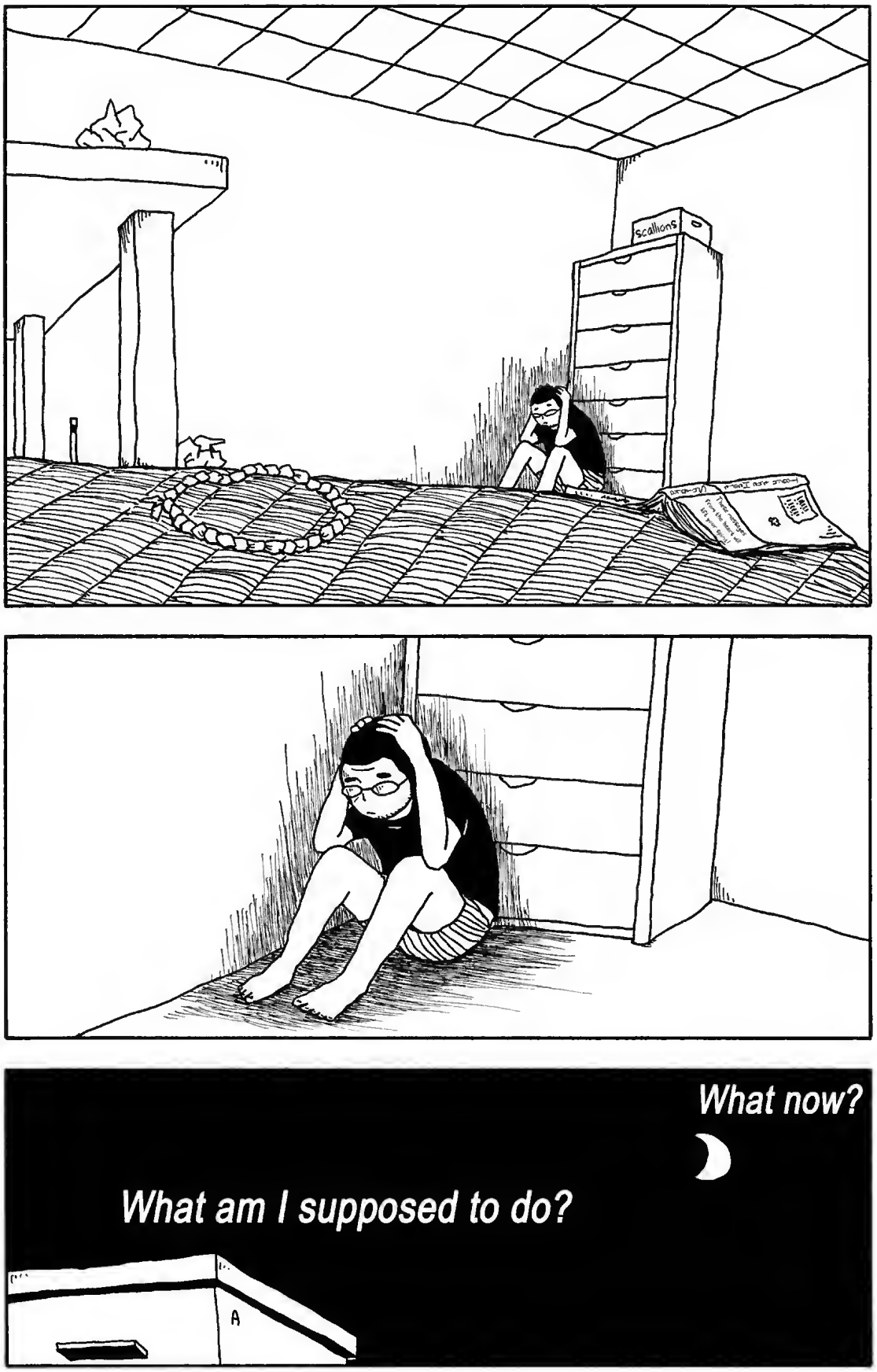

klasp
I'M SORRY TOO!
skweez
I'M SORRY!
skweez
It's a draw.
...

Chapter 4:

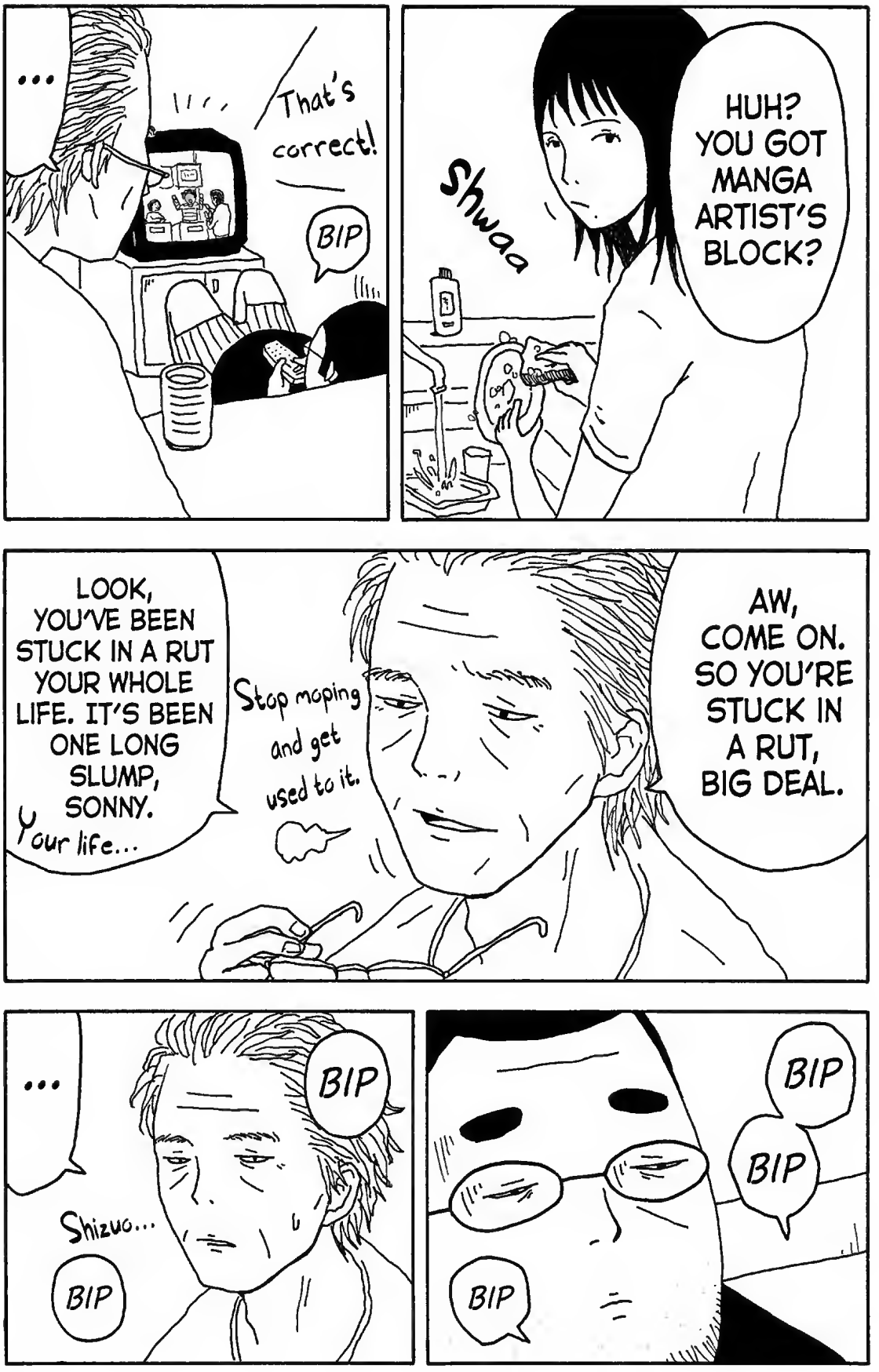
Give Me Wings

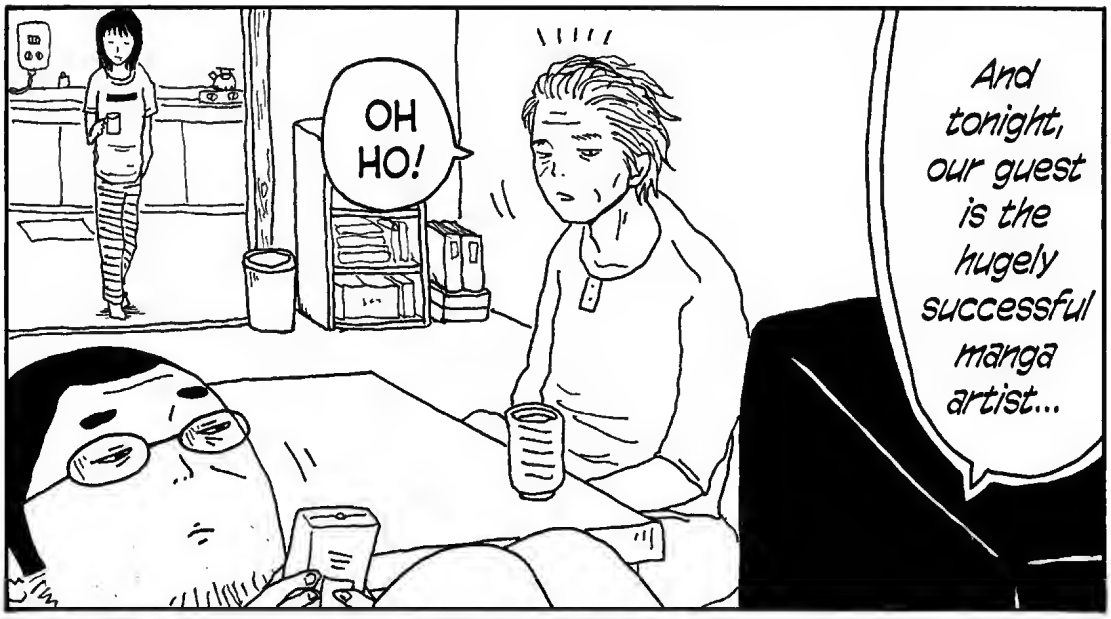


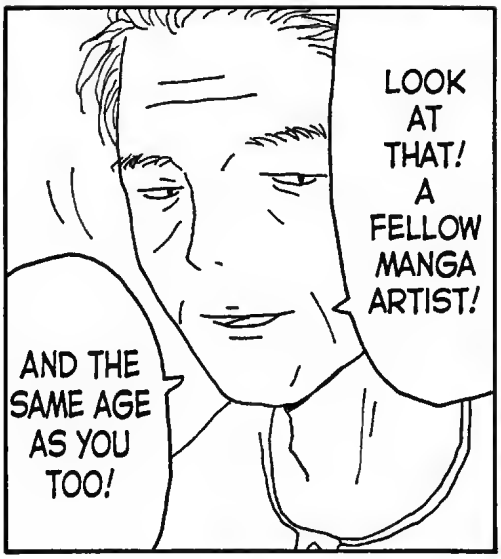

H B
Editorial
This Is How Those Manga Masterpieces You Love Came into the World!
Sayings that Touch the Heart
Shizuka Kuhonbutsu
When you've lost your way in life...
How to Live Your Forties in Style
Hisaya
500×1000
Time Machine
Renewal
One Million Yen
Mercedes

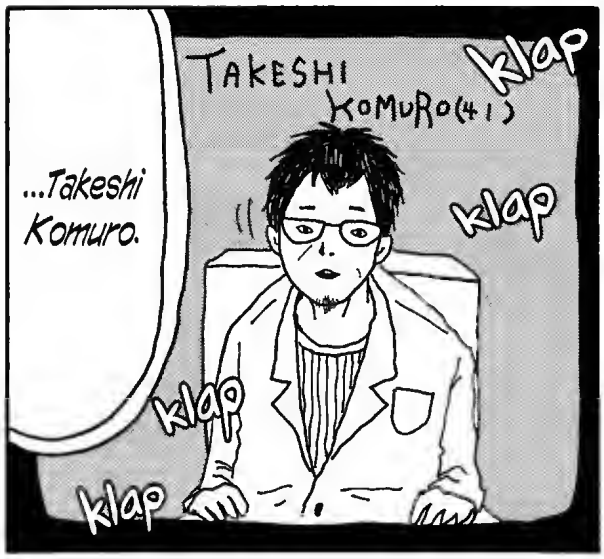

Scallions
What now?
What am I supposed to do?
A

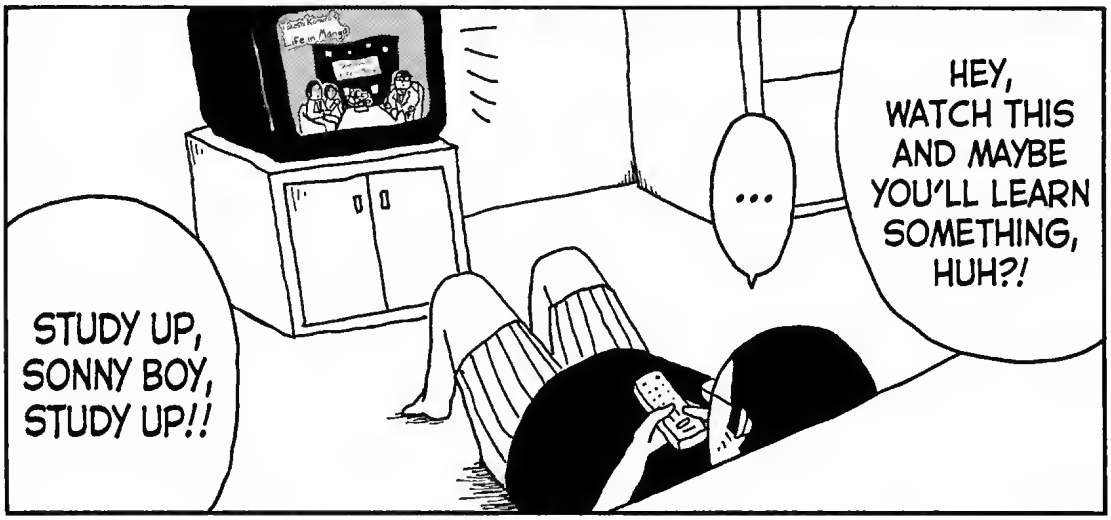
...
Help!
Please!
Somebody!
BIP
glance
YOU GOING THROUGH A SLUMP?
...

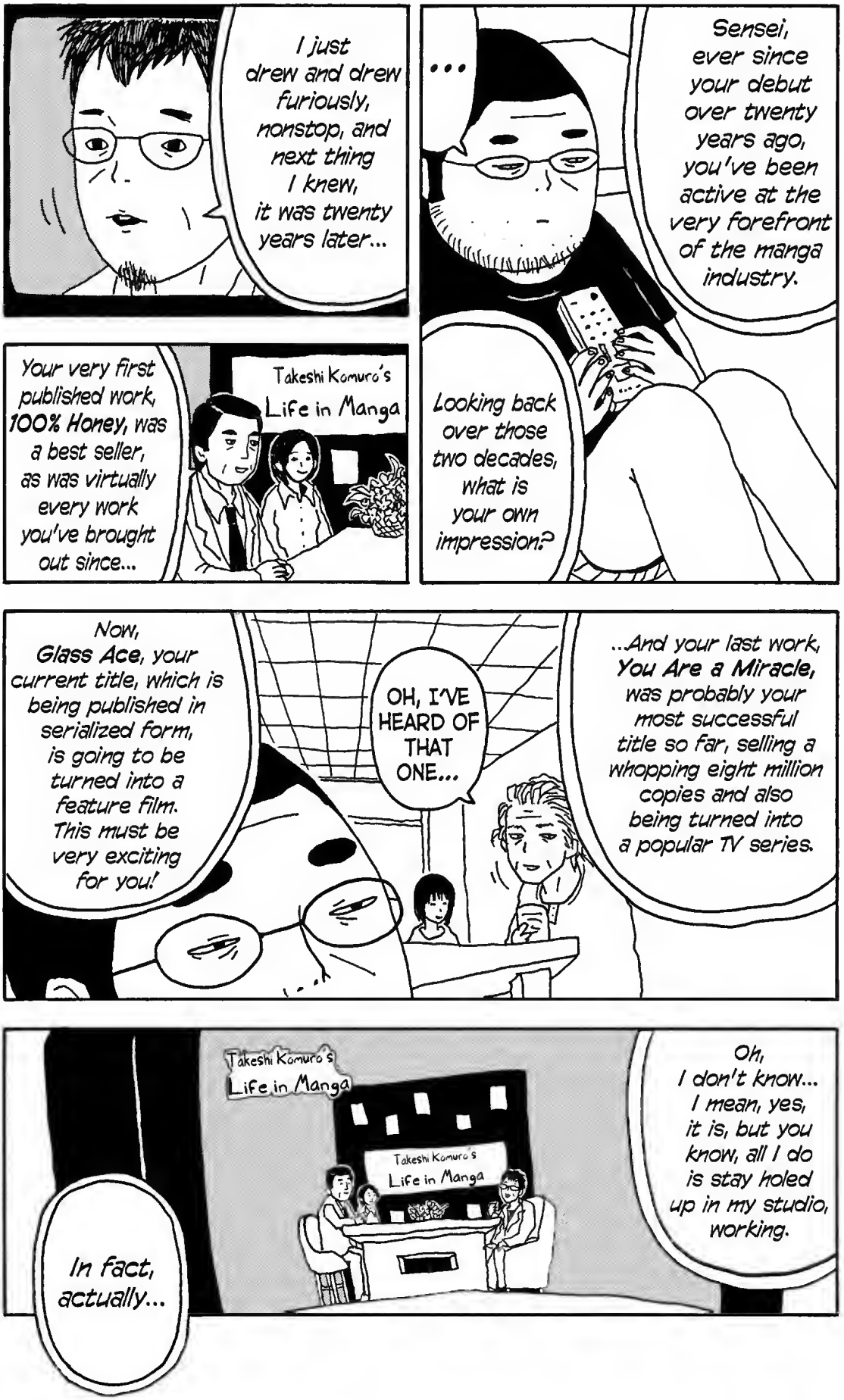

...
That's correct!
BIP
Shwaa
HUH? YOU GOT MANGA ARTIST'S BLOCK?
LOOK, YOU'VE BEEN STUCK IN A RUT YOUR WHOLE LIFE. IT'S BEEN ONE LONG SLUMP, SONNY.
Your life...
Stop moping and get used to it.
AW, COME ON. SO YOU'RE STUCK IN A RUT, BIG DEAL.
...
BIP
Shizuo...
BIP
BIP
BIP
BIP


OH HO!
And tonight, our guest is the hugely successful manga artist...

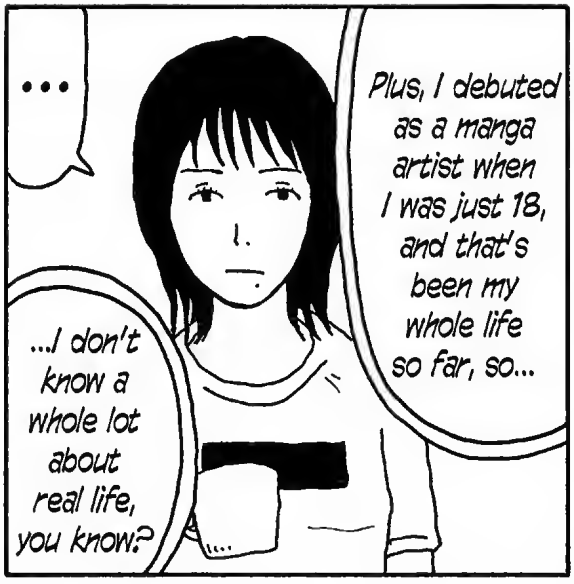

LOOK AT THAT! A FELLOW MANGA ARTIST!
AND THE SAME AGE AS YOU TOO!

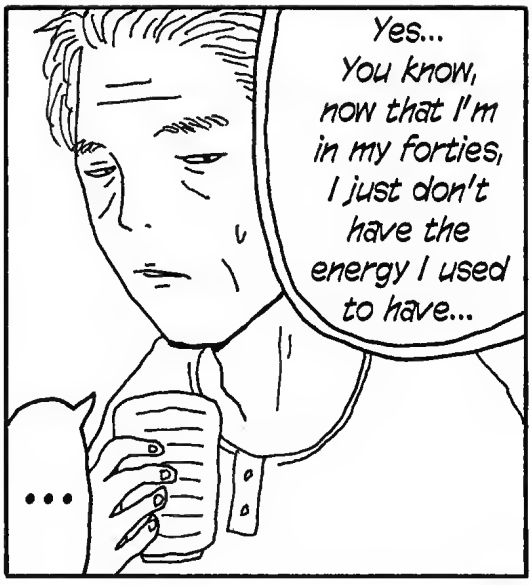

...Takeshi Komuro.
TAKESHI KOMURO(41)
klap
klap
klap
klap


Takeshi Komuro
Life in Manga
STUDY UP, SONNY BOY, STUDY UP!!
...
HEY, WATCH THIS AND MAYBE YOU'LL LEARN SOMETHING, HUH?!

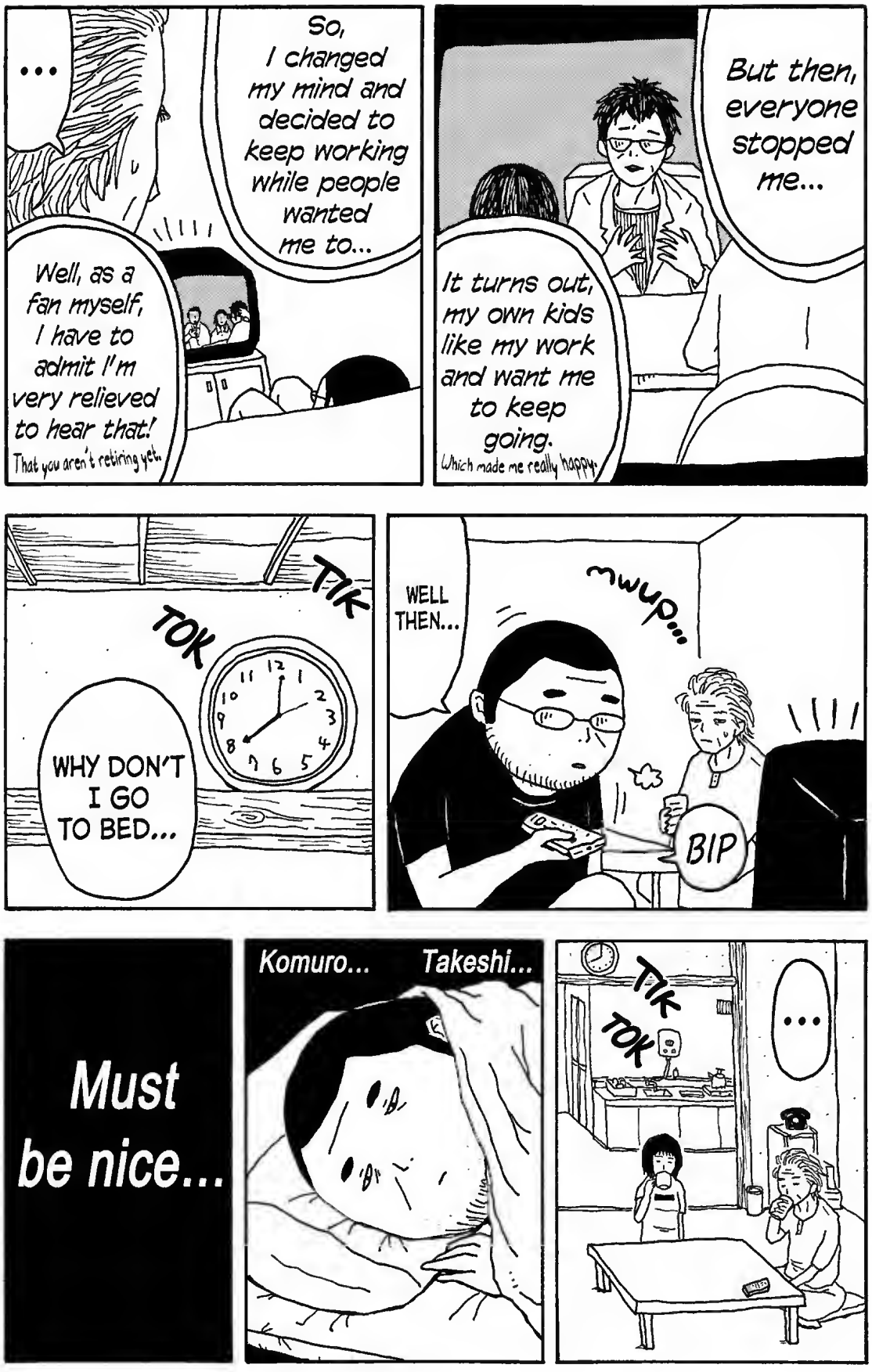

I just drew and drew furiously, nonstop, and next thing I knew, it was twenty years later...
...
Sensei, ever since your debut over twenty years ago, you've been active at the very forefront of the manga industry.
Looking back over those two decades, what is your own impression?
Your very first published work, 100% Honey, was a best seller, as was virtually every work you've brought out since...
Takeshi Komuro's Life in Manga
Now, Glass Ace, your current title, which is being published in serialized form, is going to be turned into a feature film. This must be very exciting for you!
OH, I'VE HEARD OF THAT ONE...
...And your last work, You Are a Miracle, was probably your most successful title so far, selling a whopping eight million copies and also being turned into a popular TV series.
Takeshi Komuro's Life in Manga
Takeshi Komuro's Life in Manga
In fact, actually...
Oh, I don't know... I mean, yes, it is, but you know, all I do is stay holed up in my studio, working.

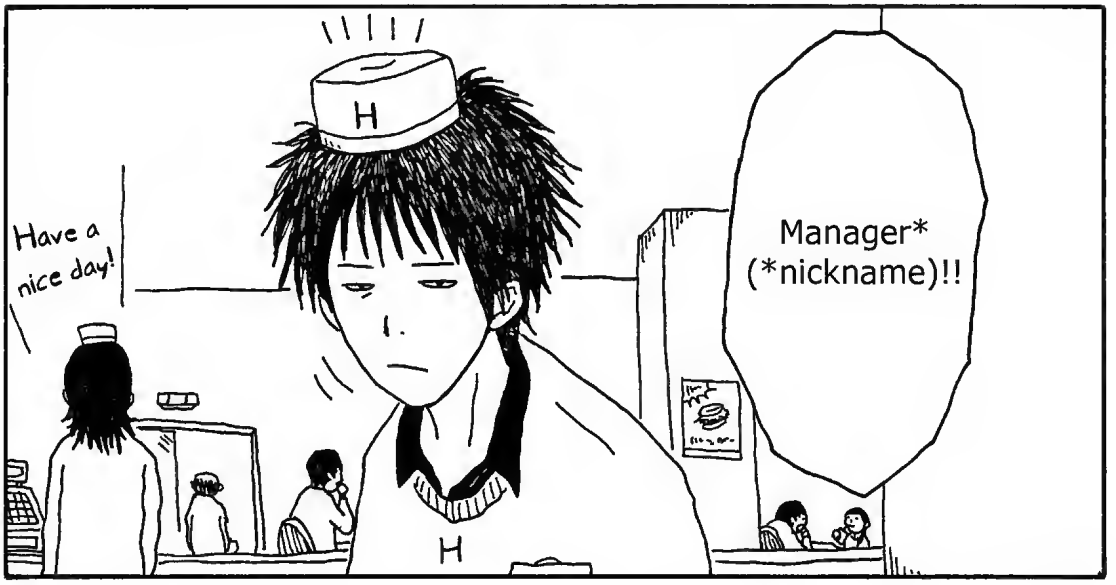
I've been thinking of retiring...
What?! Retiring?!

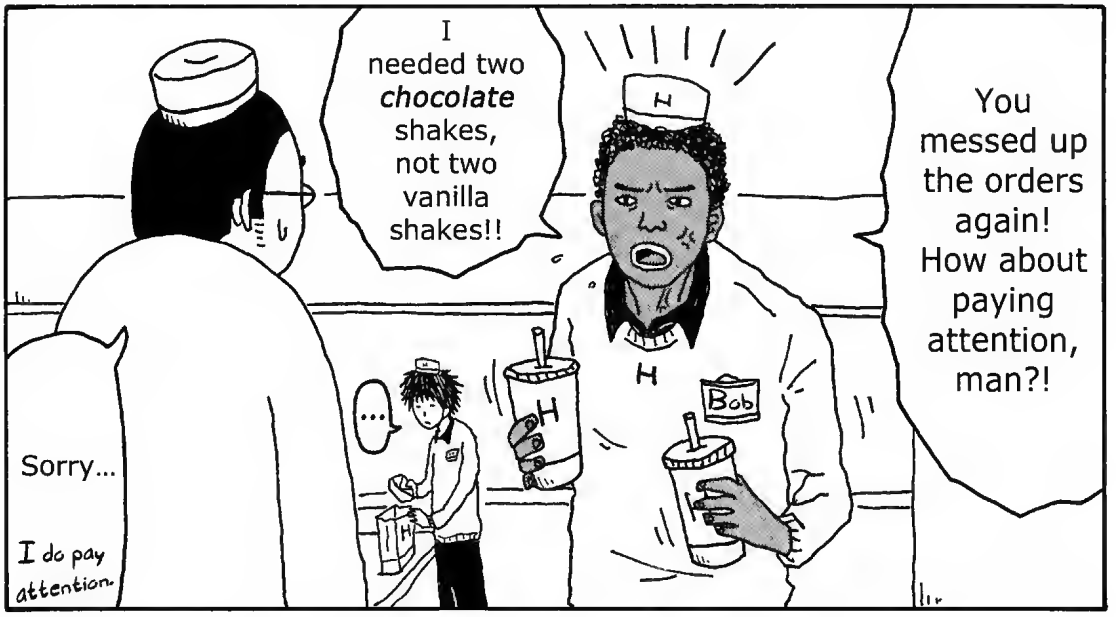

...
...I don't know a whole lot about real life, you know?
Plus, I debuted as a manga artist when I was just 18, and that's been my whole life so far, so...


Yes... You know, now that I'm in my forties, I just don't have the energy I used to have...
...

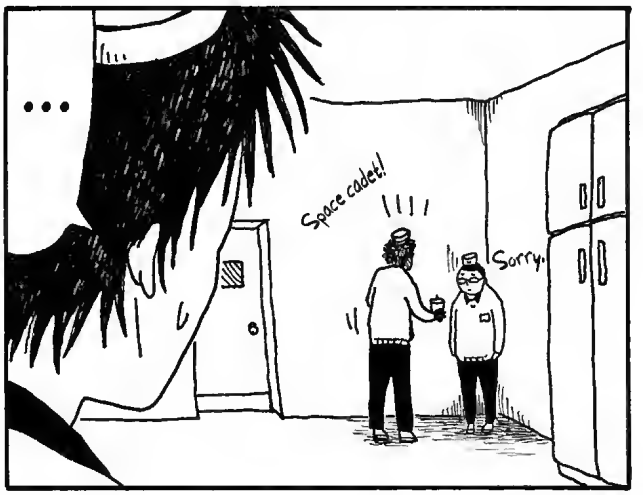
Plus, I've spent the last twenty years racing from deadline to deadline, so I've hardly had any time to spend with my family...
So I thought, okay, You Are a Miracle is going to be my last one, and then I'm going to retire and get some part-time job somewhere.
To get a taste of real life.

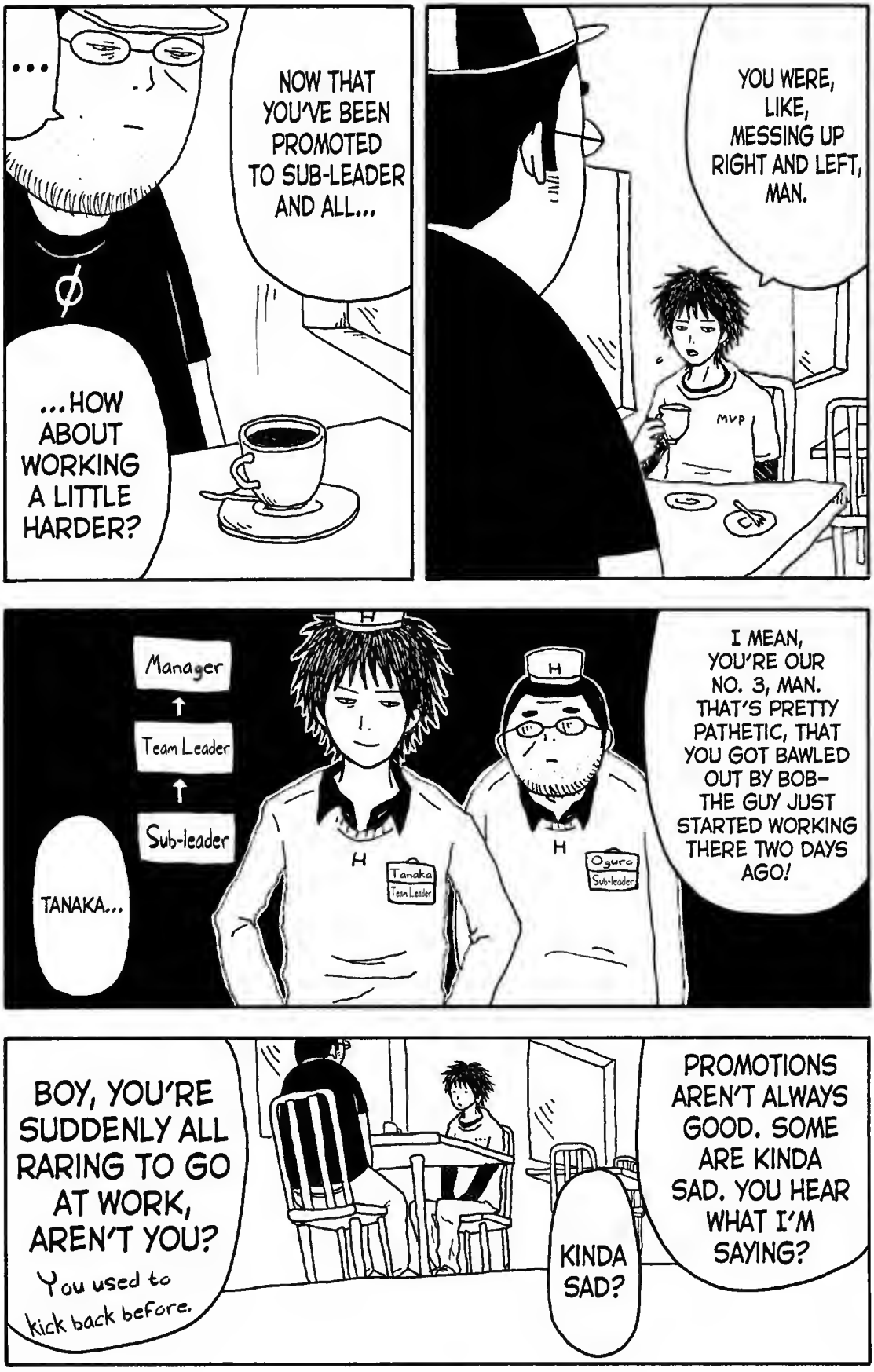

...
So, I changed my mind and decided to keep working while people wanted me to...
Well, as a fan myself, I have to admit I'm very relieved to hear that!
That you aren't retiring yet.
But then, everyone stopped me...
It turns out, my own kids like my work and want me to keep going.
Which made me really happy.
TIK
TOK
WHY DON'T I GO TO BED...
WELL THEN...
MWUP...
BIP
Must be nice...
Komuro...
Takeshi...
TIK
TOK
...


Have a nice day!
Manager* (*nickname)!!

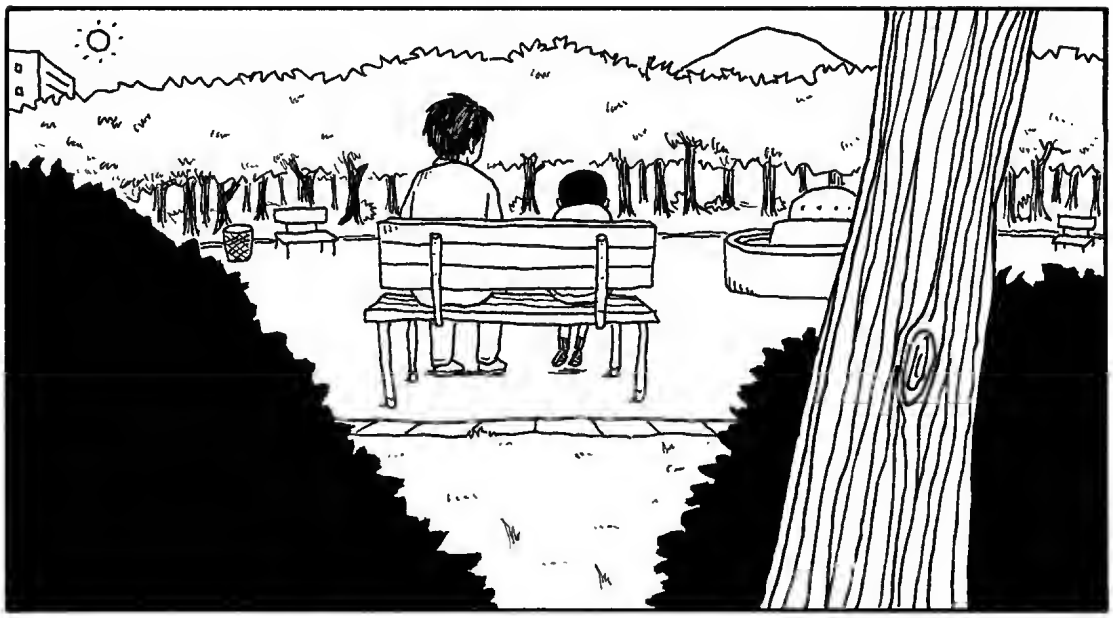

I needed two *chocolate* shakes, not two vanilla shakes!!
You messed up the orders again! How about paying attention, man?!
Sorry...
I do pay attention.
...
Bob

Bambi
Coffee Shop Bambi
WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH YOU TODAY, MANAGER?


...
Space cadet!
Sorry.


...
NOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN PROMOTED TO SUB-LEADER AND ALL...
...HOW ABOUT WORKING A LITTLE HARDER?
YOU WERE, LIKE, MESSING UP RIGHT AND LEFT, MAN.
MVP
Manager
Team Leader
Sub-leader
TANAKA...
Tanaka
Team Leader
Ogura
Sub-leader
I MEAN, YOU'RE OUR NO. 3, MAN. THAT'S PRETTY PATHETIC, THAT YOU GOT BAWLED OUT BY BOB— THE GUY JUST STARTED WORKING THERE TWO DAYS AGO!
BOY, YOU'RE SUDDENLY ALL RARING TO GO AT WORK, AREN'T YOU?
You used to kick back before.
KINDA SAD?
PROMOTIONS AREN'T ALWAYS GOOD. SOME ARE KINDA SAD. YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING?

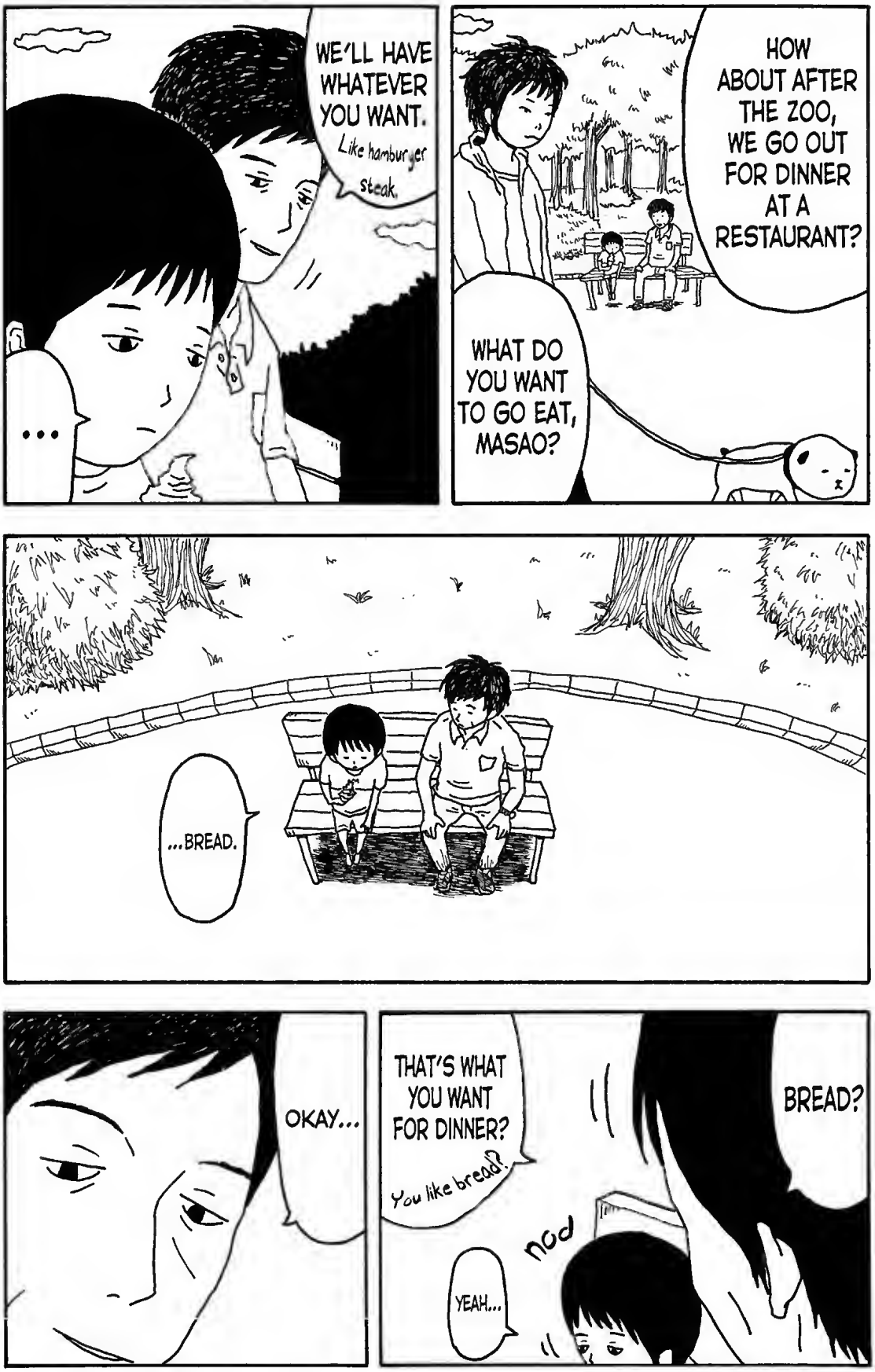
UH-HUH...
YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE NEW TANAKA!
YEAH, WELL, I'VE CHANGED, SEE?!
I made Team Leader, come on!
gwup
MVP
HOW ABOUT TREATING ME ONCE IN A WHILE?
You're old enough to be my dad.
klink
100
100
100
WELL, I BETTER GET GOING.
That's for mine.
SEE YA.
...
...THAT THAT CAP YOU'RE WEARING IS REALLY COOL.
Where'd you buy it?
WELL, TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'VE BEEN THINKING...
SO MAKE ME *WANT* TO PICK UP THE TAB FOR YOU.
I MEAN, YOU PICK UP THE TAB FOR THE GIRLS, DON'T YOU?
klunk
MVP

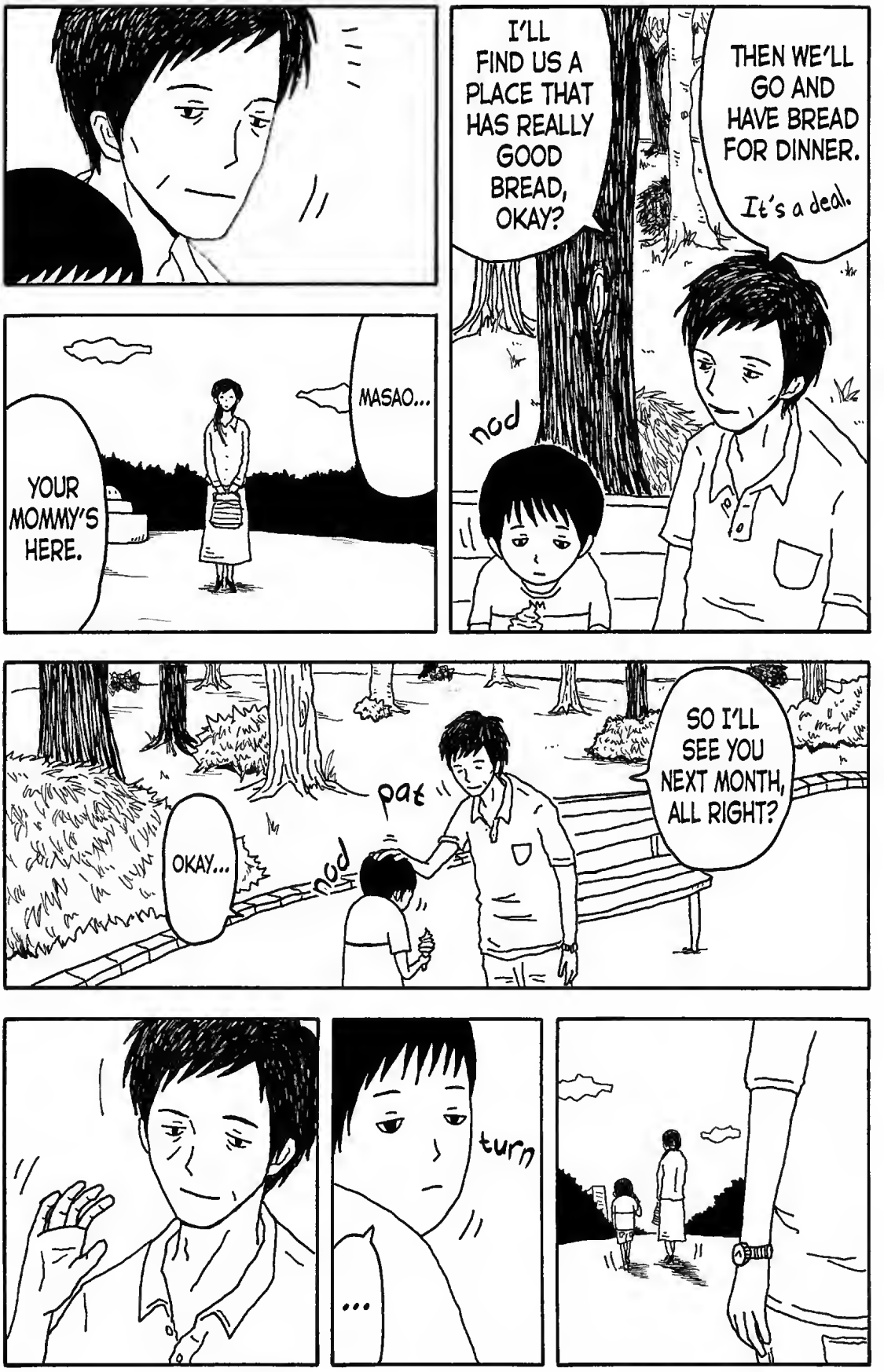


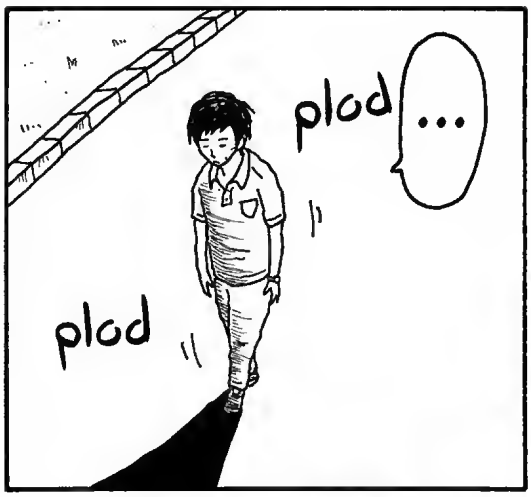
YOU WANT TO GO TO THE ZOO NEXT TIME?

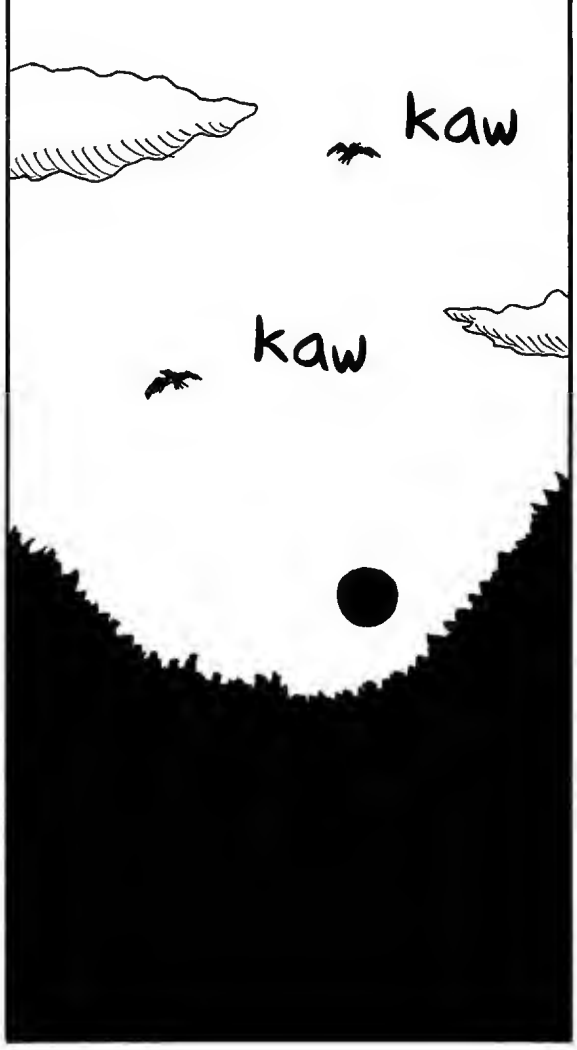
HOW'S THE ICE CREAM, MASAO?
GOOD...

YEAH...
Shlrp

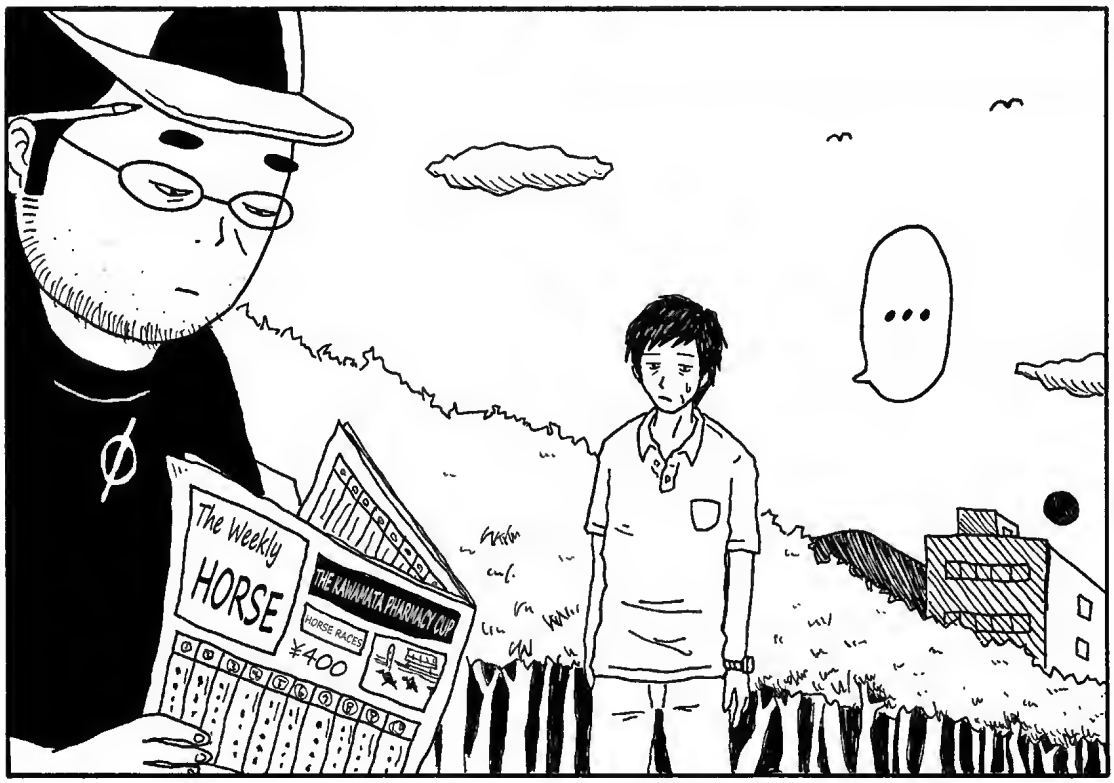

WE'LL HAVE WHATEVER YOU WANT.
Like hamburger steak.
...
HOW ABOUT AFTER THE ZOO, WE GO OUT FOR DINNER AT A RESTAURANT?
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO GO EAT, MASAO?
...BREAD.
OKAY...
THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT FOR DINNER?
You like bread?
YEAH...
nod
BREAD?


I'LL FIND US A PLACE THAT HAS REALLY GOOD BREAD, OKAY?
THEN WE'LL GO AND HAVE BREAD FOR DINNER.
It's a deal.
nod
MASAO...
YOUR MOMMY'S HERE.
SO I'LL SEE YOU NEXT MONTH, ALL RIGHT?
pat
nod
OKAY...
turn
...

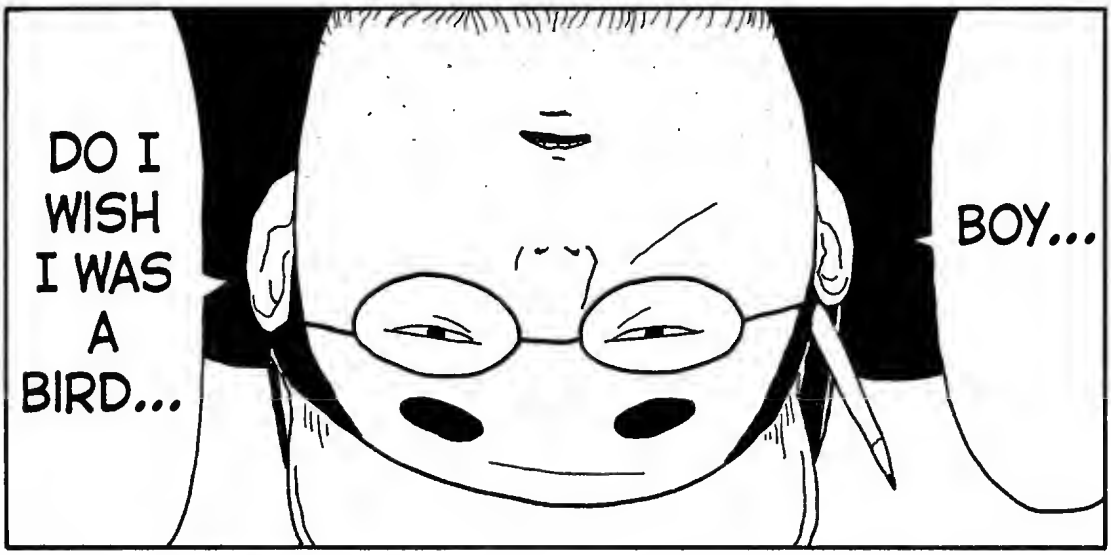

plod
...
plod


kaw
kaw

!
HALT

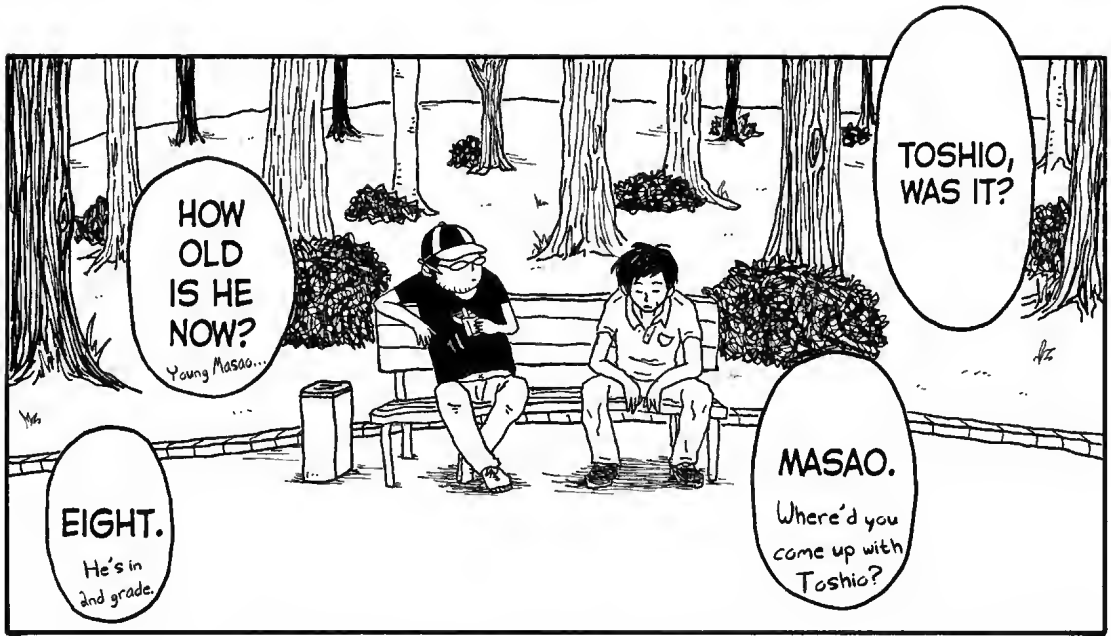

...
The Weekly
HORSE
THE KAWAMATA PHARMACY CUP
HORSE RACES
¥400

phlap
phlap
phlap

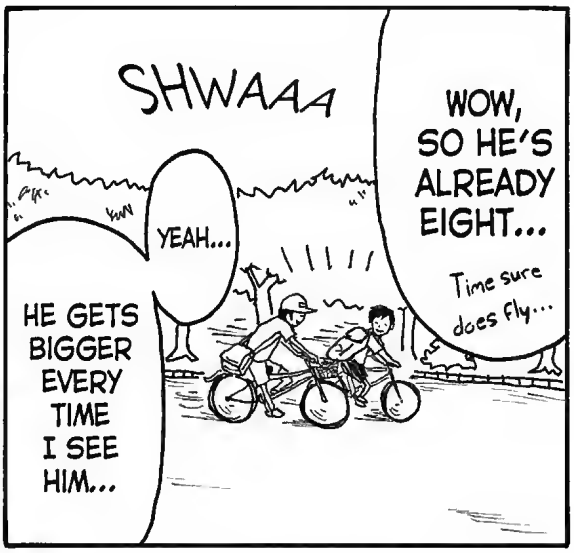

DO I WISH I WAS A BIRD...
BOY...

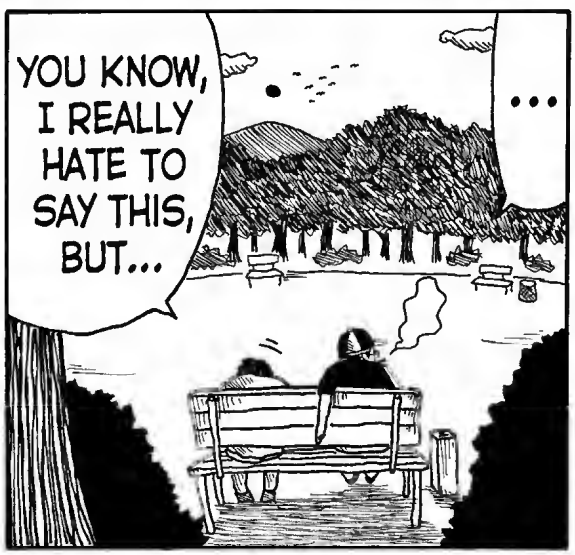
I SPENT THE DAY WITH MY KID TODAY.
...

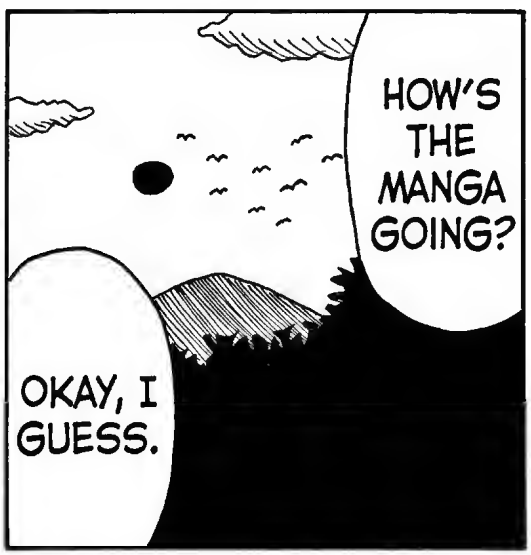
mutter
mutter
...

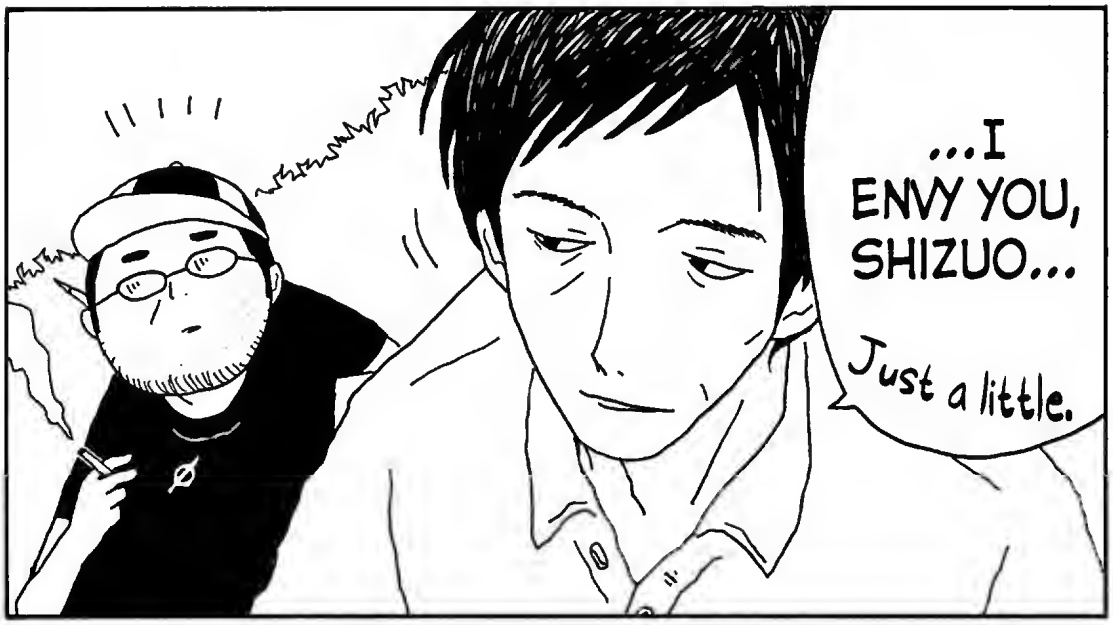

TOSHIO, WAS IT?
HOW OLD IS HE NOW?
Young Masao...
EIGHT.
He's in 2nd grade.
MASAO.
Where'd you come up with Toshio?

...


SHWAAA
WOW, SO HE'S ALREADY EIGHT...
Time sure does fly...
YEAH...
HE GETS BIGGER EVERY TIME I SEE HIM...

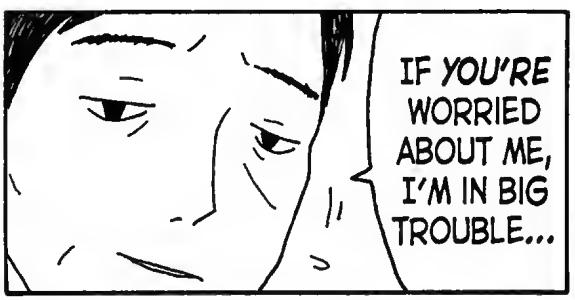

YOU KNOW, I REALLY HATE TO SAY THIS, BUT...
...


HOW'S THE MANGA GOING?
OKAY, I GUESS.

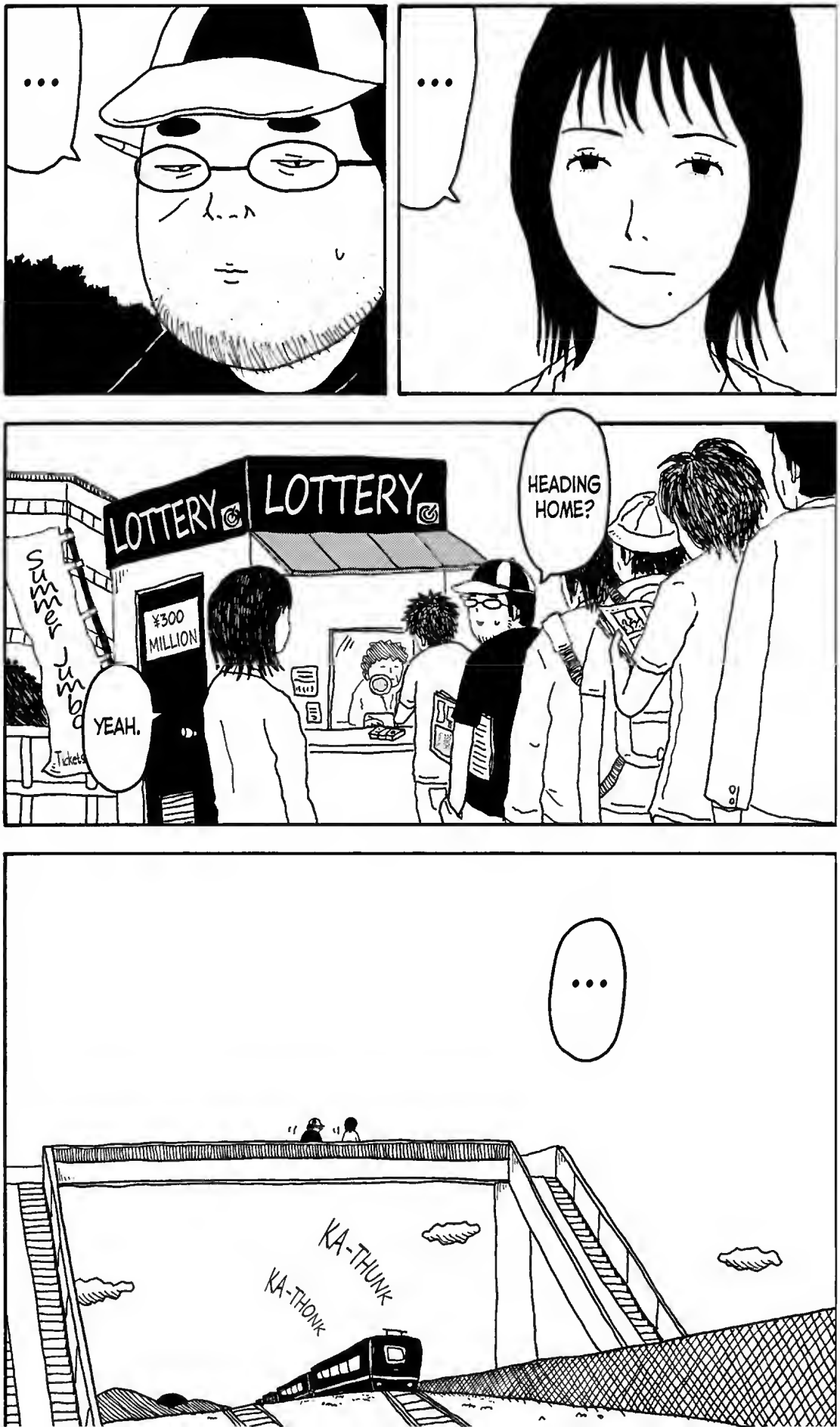

...I ENVY YOU, SHIZUO...
Just a little.

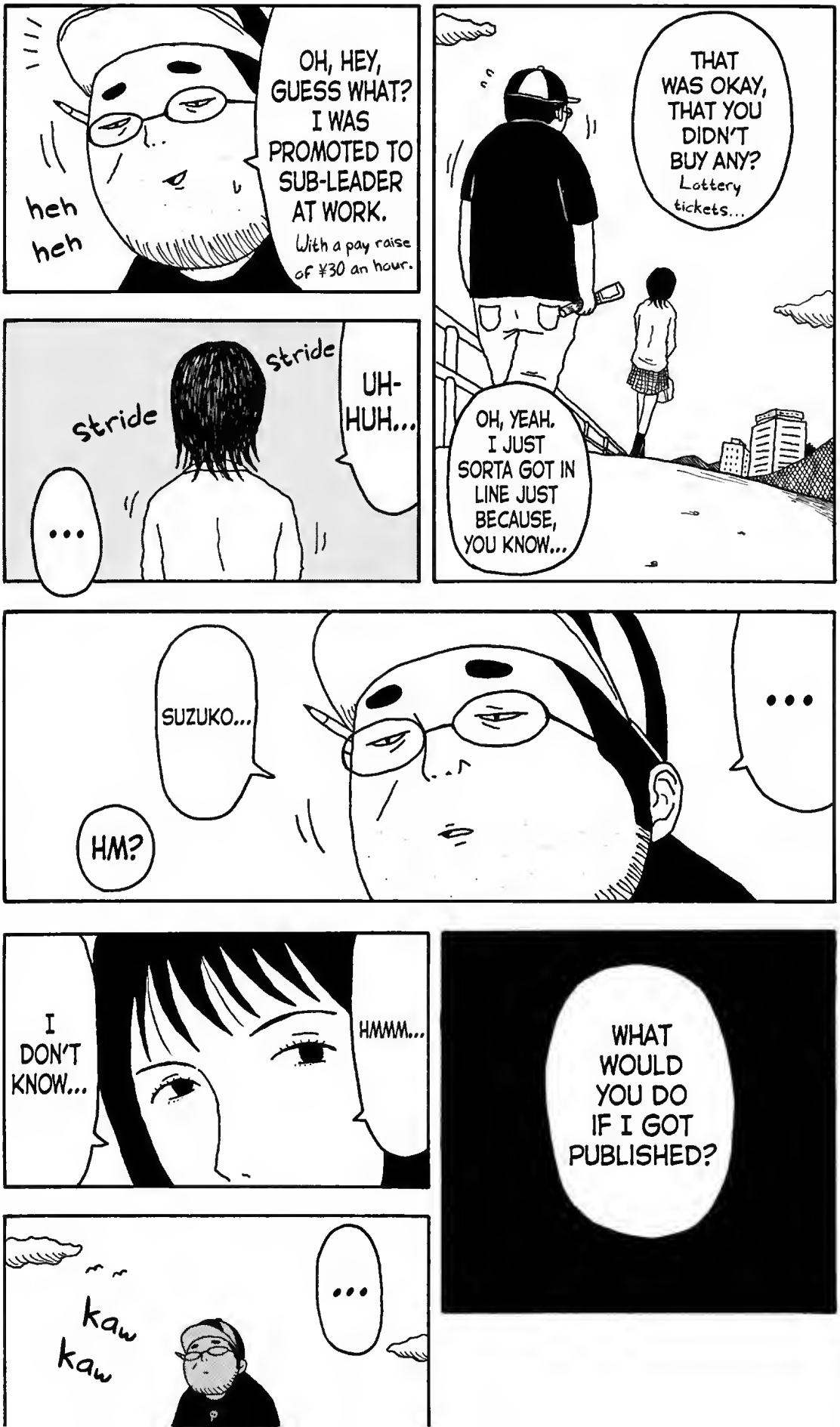
...
...

MIYATA...
YOU OKAY?
I'm not that sure...
Whatsa matter?

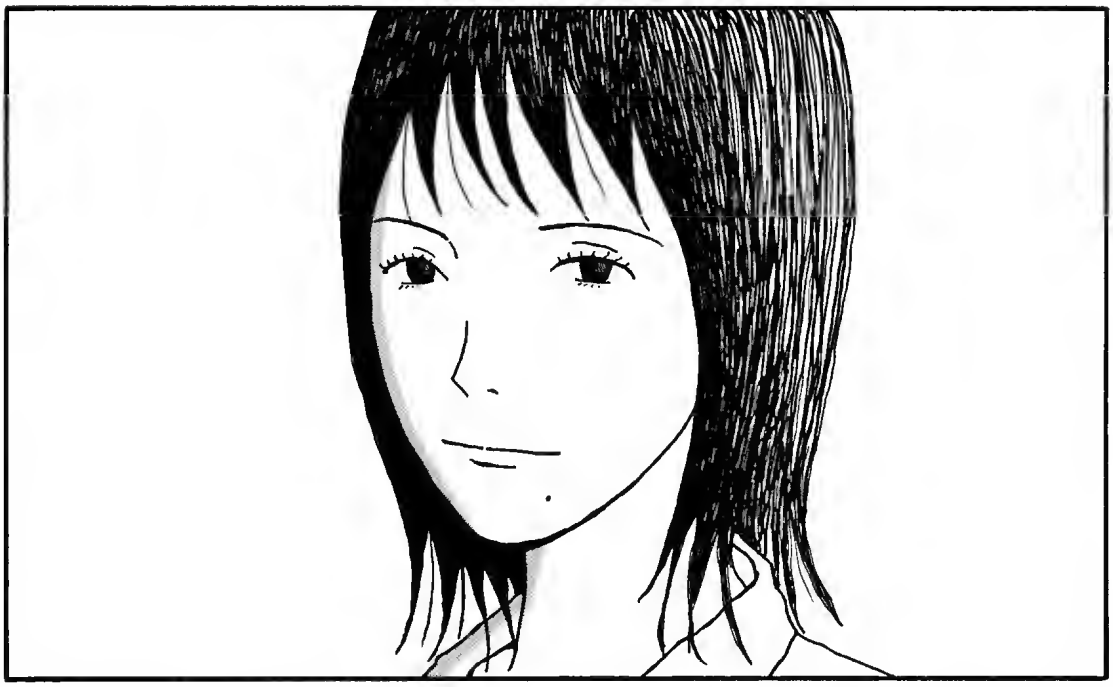

IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT ME, I'M IN BIG TROUBLE...

MIYA-CHAN! THAT HURT MY FEELINGS!
It was cruel!
NO, SERIOUSLY...
Please don't worry about me.
MIYATA! SAY YOU'RE SORRY!!


...
...
LOTTERY
LOTTERY
Summer Jumbo
¥300 MILLION
Tickets
YEAH.
HEADING HOME?
...
KA-THUNK
KA-THONK


heh heh
OH, HEY, GUESS WHAT? I WAS PROMOTED TO SUB-LEADER AT WORK.
With a pay raise of ¥30 an hour.
THAT WAS OKAY, THAT YOU DIDN'T BUY ANY?
Lottery tickets...
OH, YEAH. I JUST SORTA GOT IN LINE JUST BECAUSE, YOU KNOW...
stride
stride
UH-HUH...
...
SUZUKO...
HM?
...
I DON'T KNOW...
HMMM...
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF I GOT PUBLISHED?
kaw
kaw
...

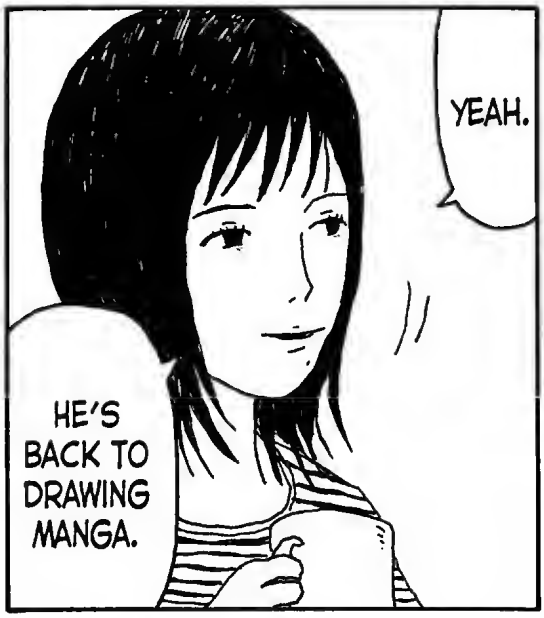
I REALLY DON'T KNOW. SO GET PUBLISHED, AND WE'LL FIND OUT.

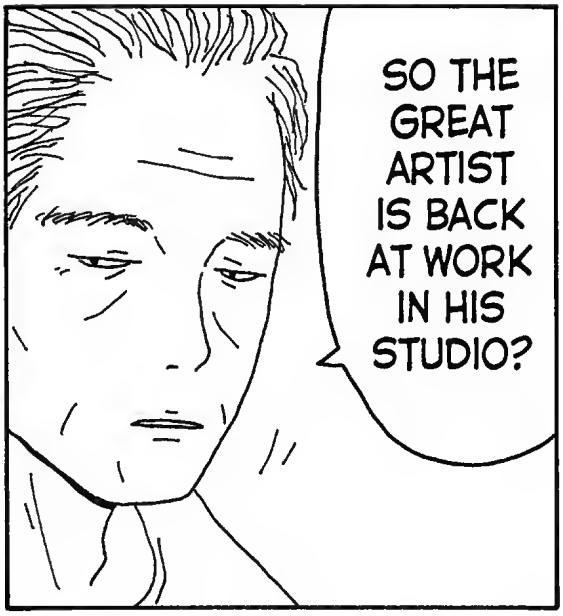


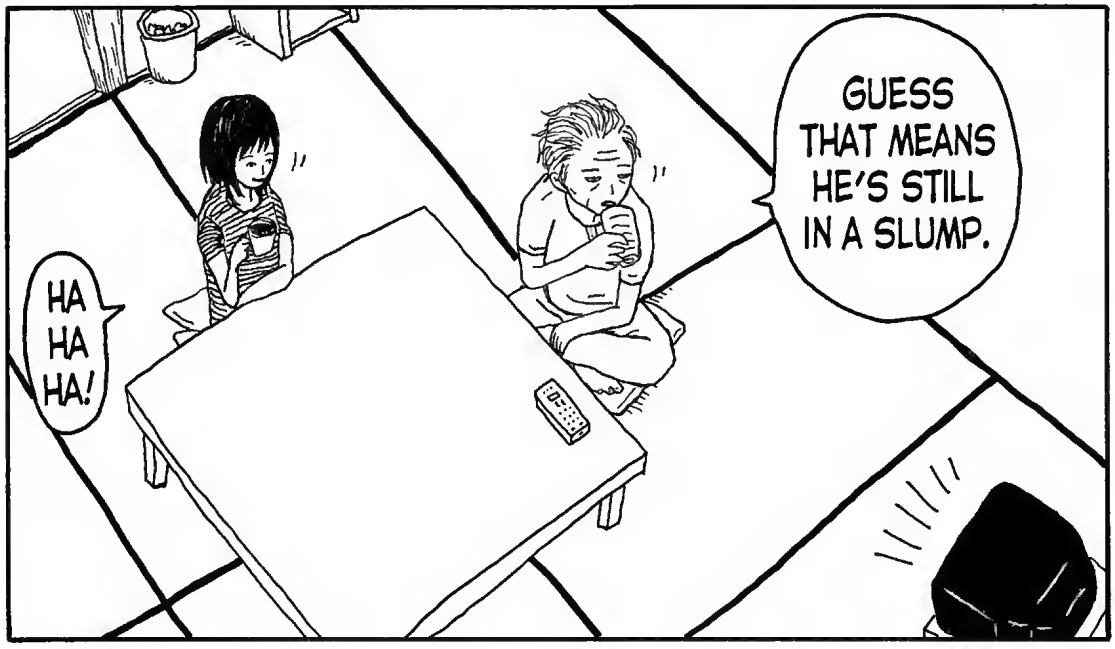
...

HA HA!
YOU THINK IT'S EASY TO DRAW MANGA, DO YOU?!

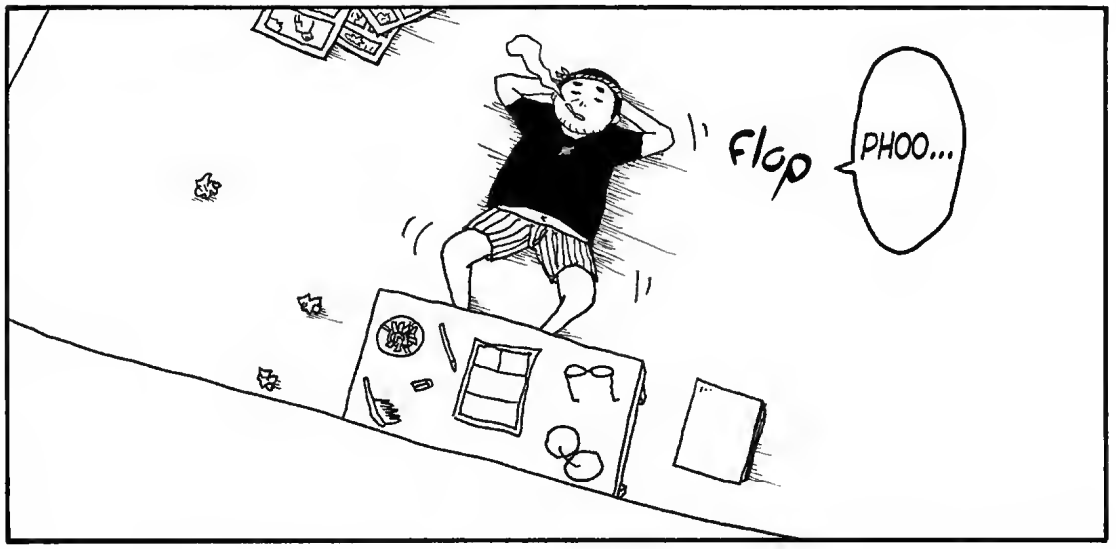
A
B

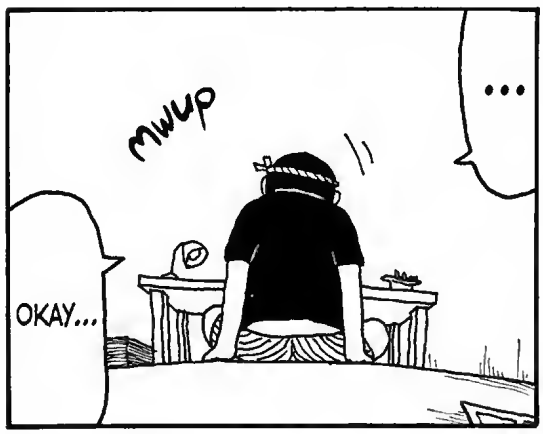

YEAH.
HE'S BACK TO DRAWING MANGA.

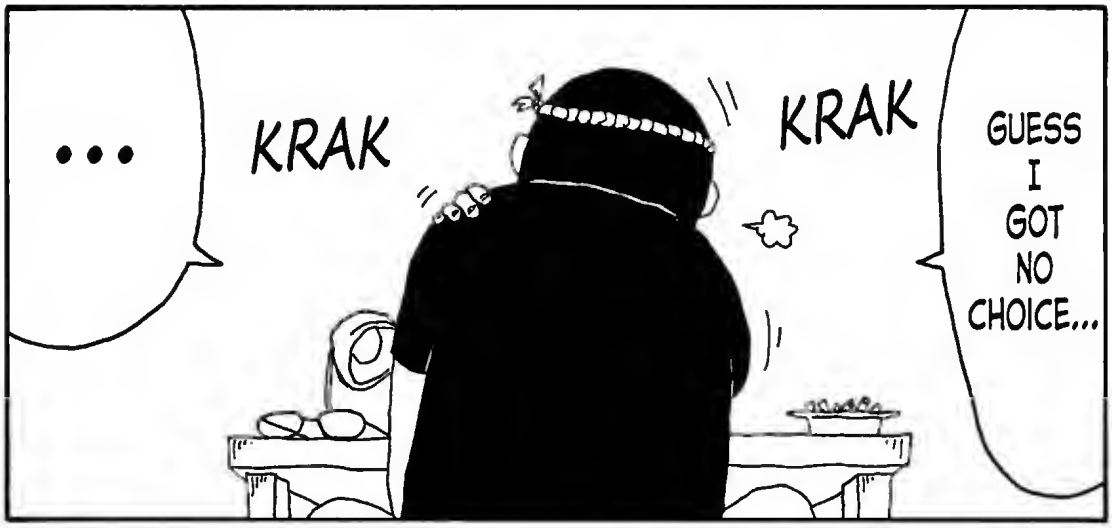

SO THE GREAT ARTIST IS BACK AT WORK IN HIS STUDIO?


GUESS THAT MEANS HE'S STILL IN A SLUMP.
HA HA HA!

"So get published."






...
KRAK
KRAK
GUESS I GOT NO CHOICE...

THAT LITTLE SQUIRT, BOSSING ME AROUND...

...

My Life So Far And From Now On
Shuzo Oshimi

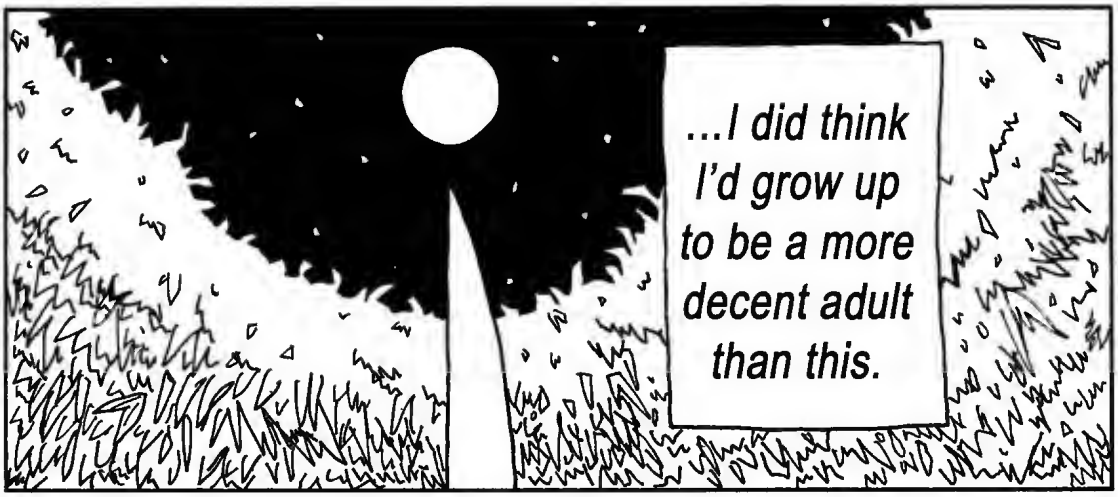
God

God

Bonus Story:

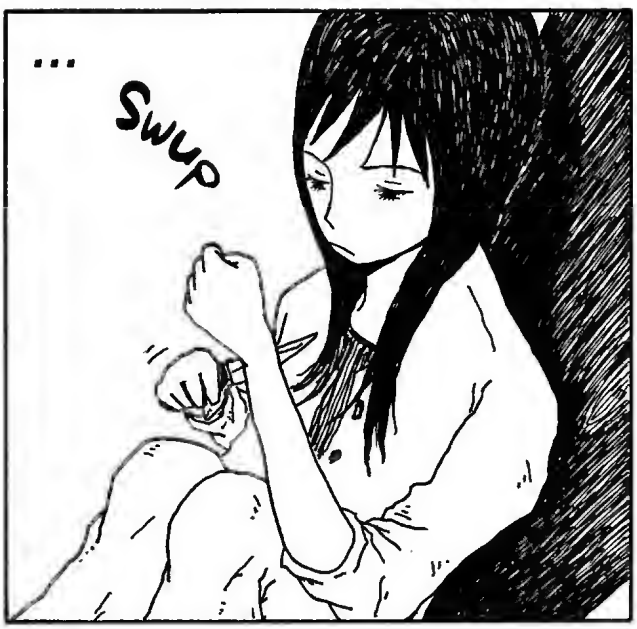
To Live

Does my life mean anything?
I don't think it has any special meaning.
But...

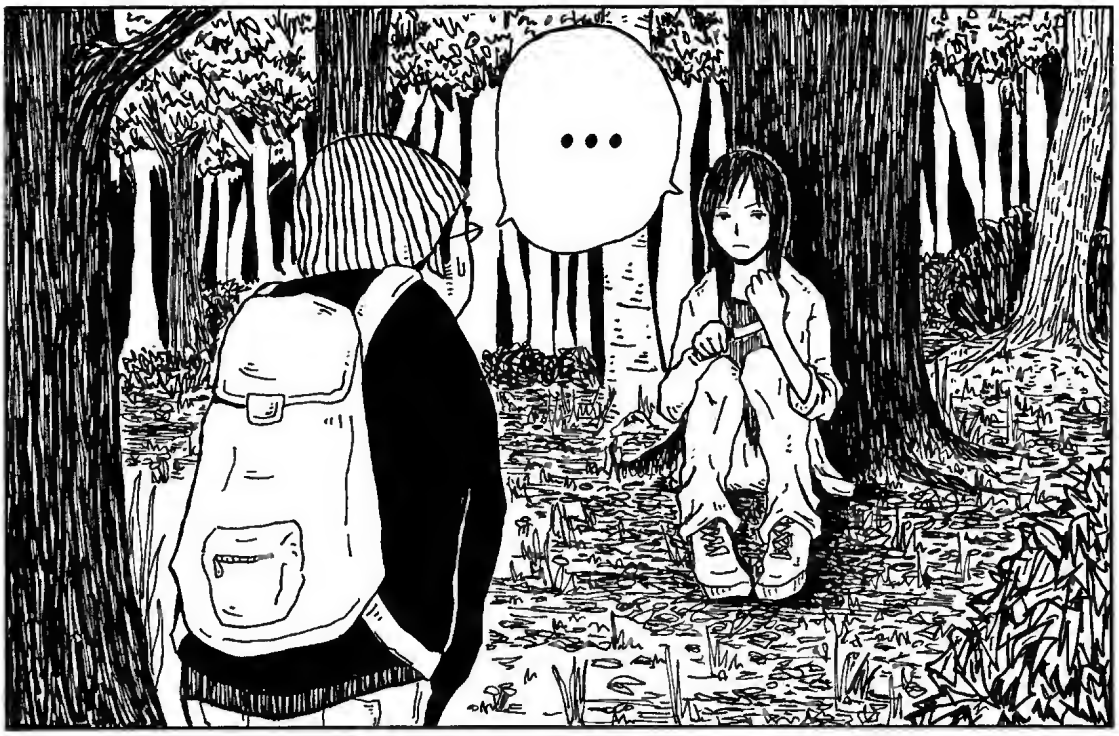

...I did think I'd grow up to be a more decent adult than this.

A decent adult...

?
SLOSH
SLOSH


...
SWUP

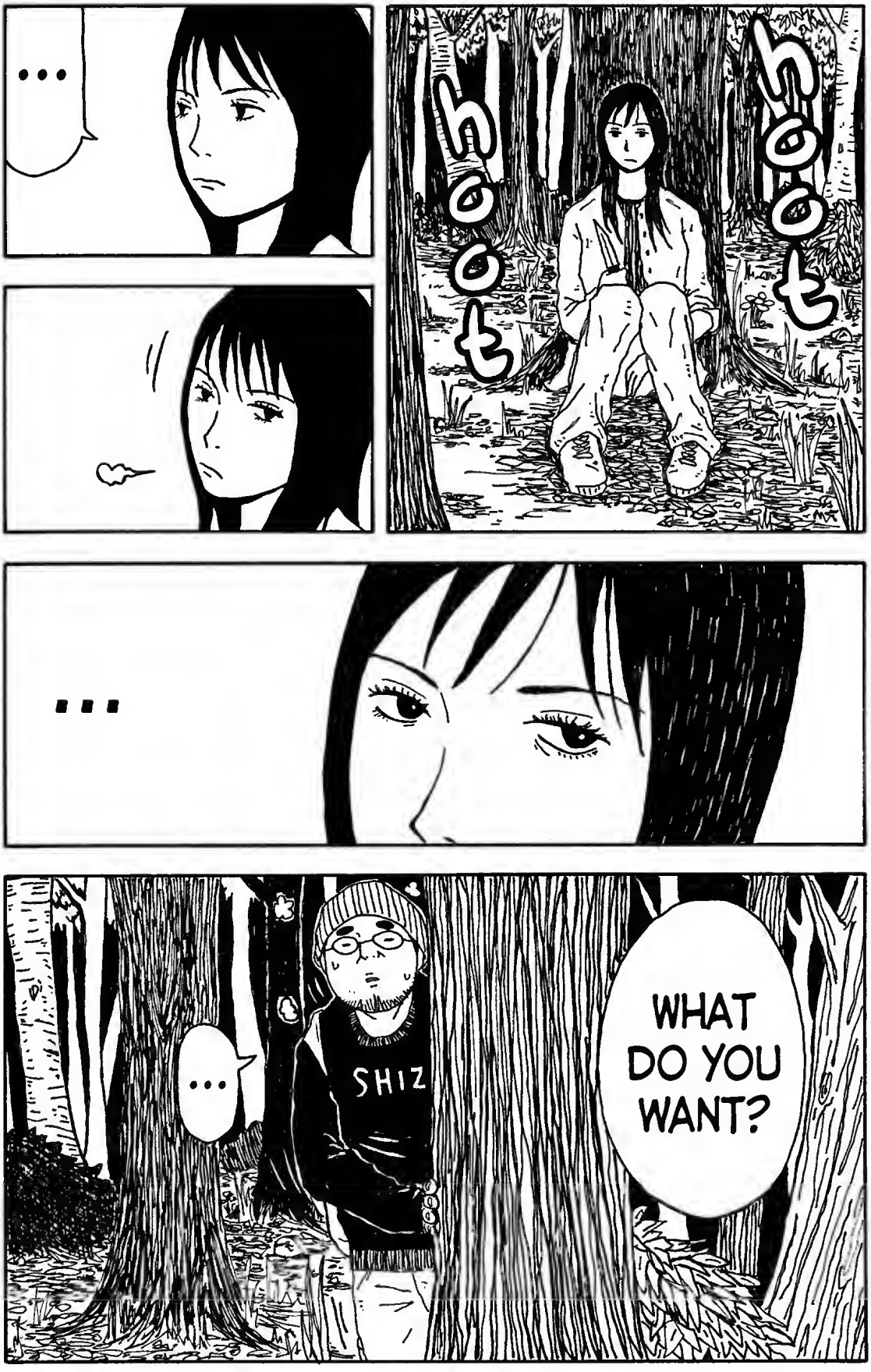
SLOSH SLOSH
...
SLOSH SLOSH SLOSH
SLOSH SLOSH
AH-HH...
turn
SHIZUO
PHOO.
WAARGH!!
SHIZU
YULPPP

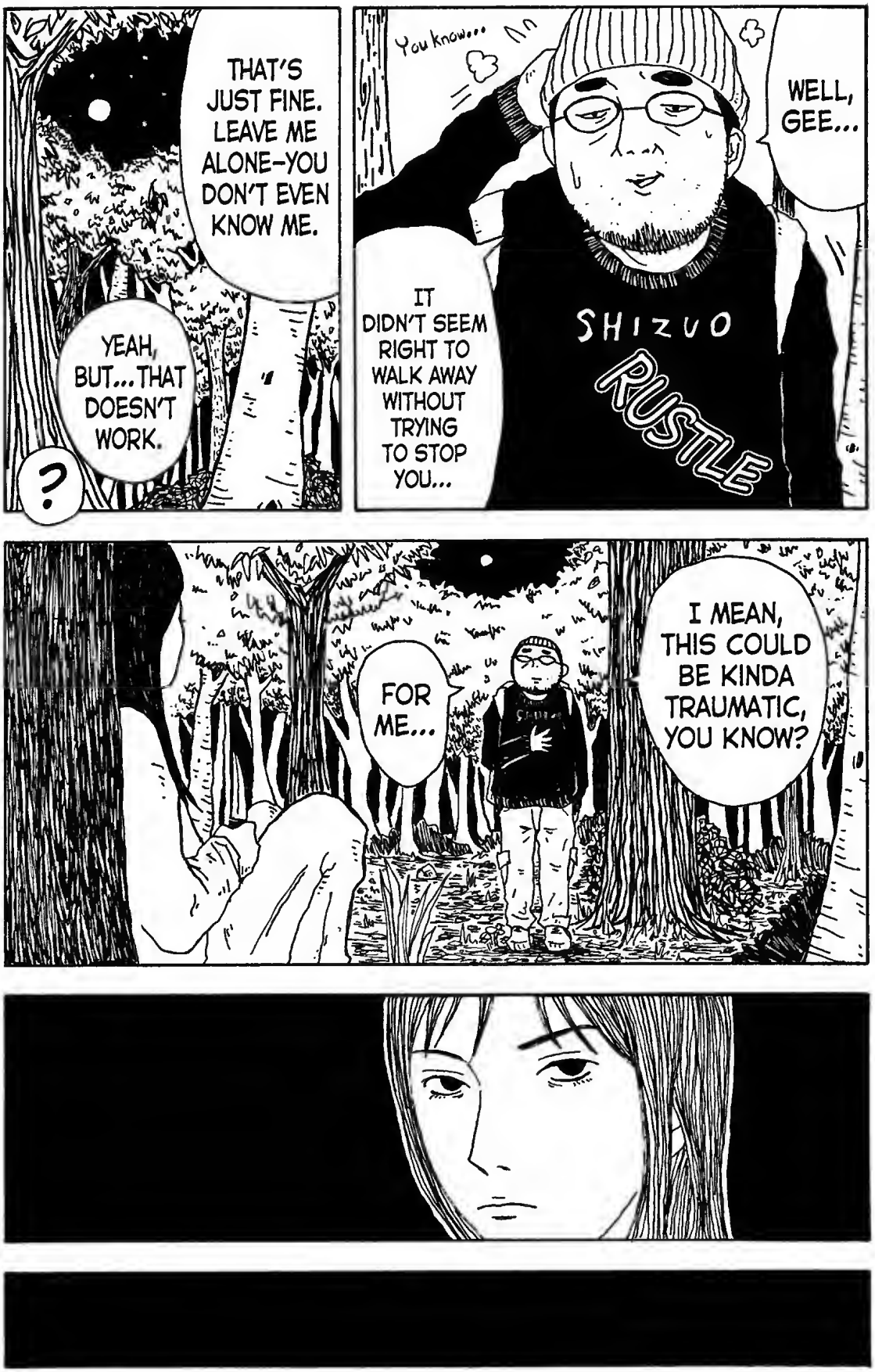

...

Ummm...

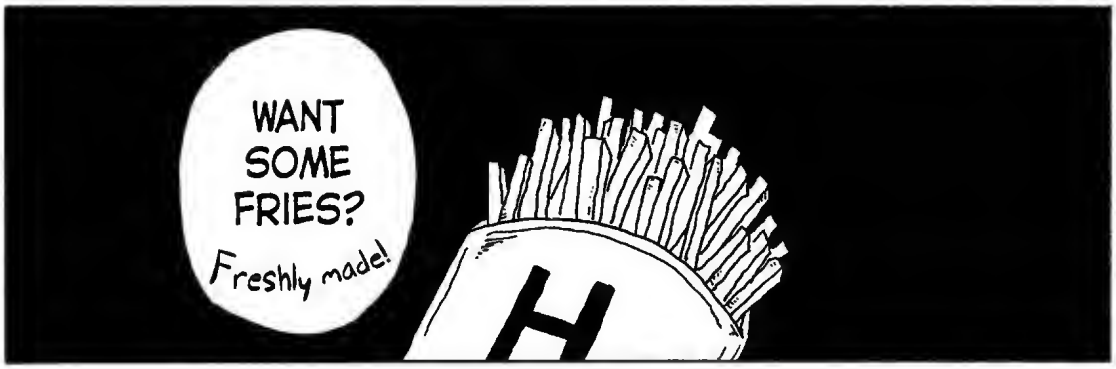
tok
tok
tok

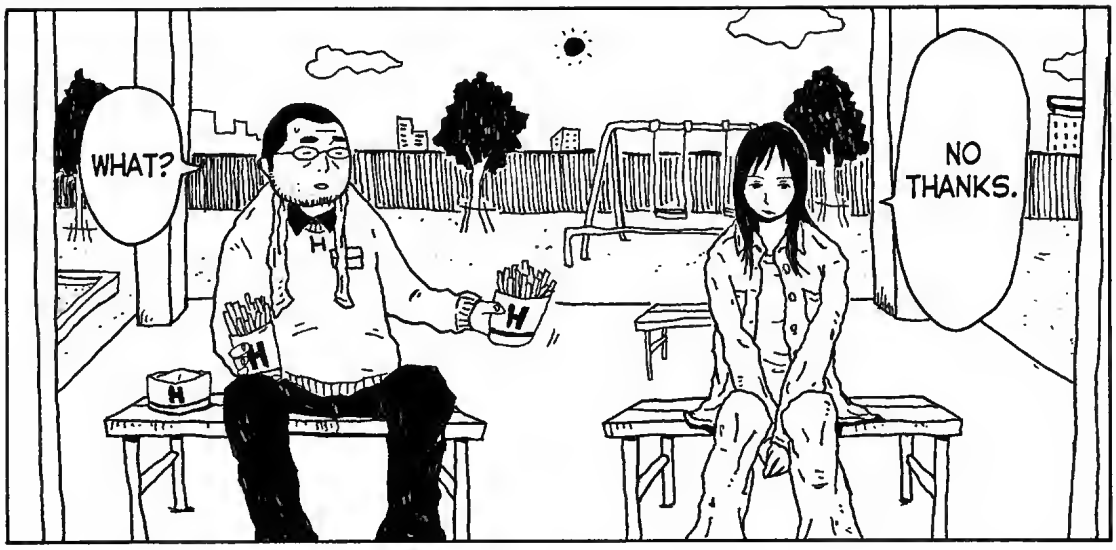
Whoops!
OH!
SHIZUO
I'M LEAVING NOW!

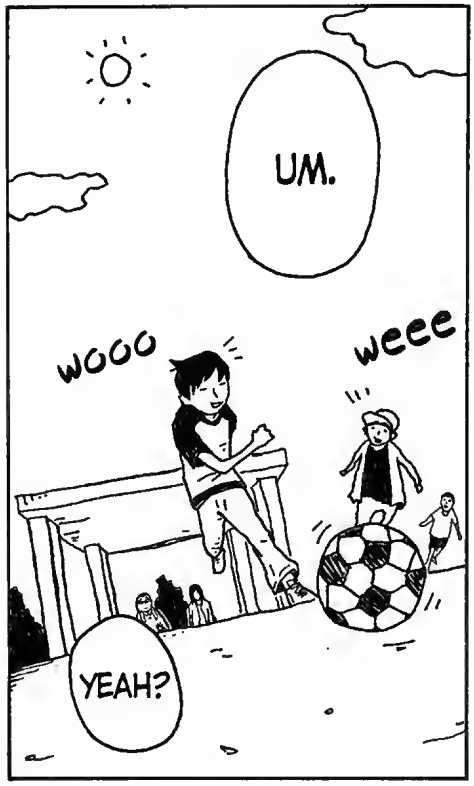

...
shoot
shoot
...
...
SHIZ
WHAT DO YOU WANT?


THAT'S JUST FINE. LEAVE ME ALONE—YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ME.
YEAH, BUT... THAT DOESN'T WORK.
?
You know...
WELL, GEE...
IT DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT TO WALK AWAY WITHOUT TRYING TO STOP YOU...
SHIZUO
RUSTLE
FOR ME...
I MEAN, THIS COULD BE KINDA TRAUMATIC, YOU KNOW?

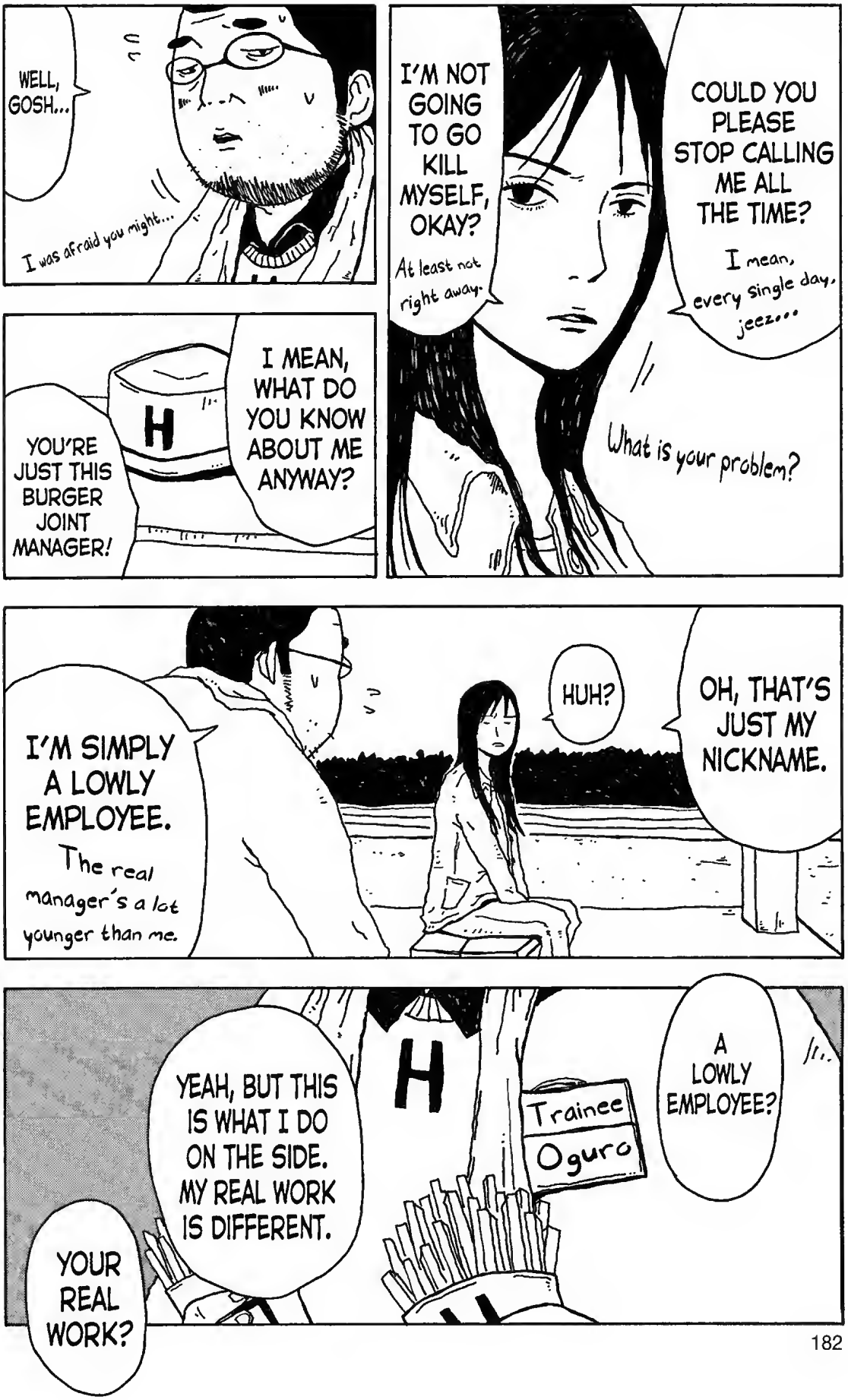
glance
glance
...
H Burge
WELCOME TO H BURGERS!
H Burgers
H
Burgers
I'd like to talk to that guy there.
LARGE ORDER OF FRIES COMING UP!
...
Who is she?
CUS-TOMER WANTS TO TALK TO YOU.
MANAGER!
YEAH?
Shinohara
Beef Tripe Burger
Curry-flavored Burger On Sale
OH, HEY!
burble


WANT SOME FRIES?
Freshly made!
H


WHAT?
NO THANKS.
H

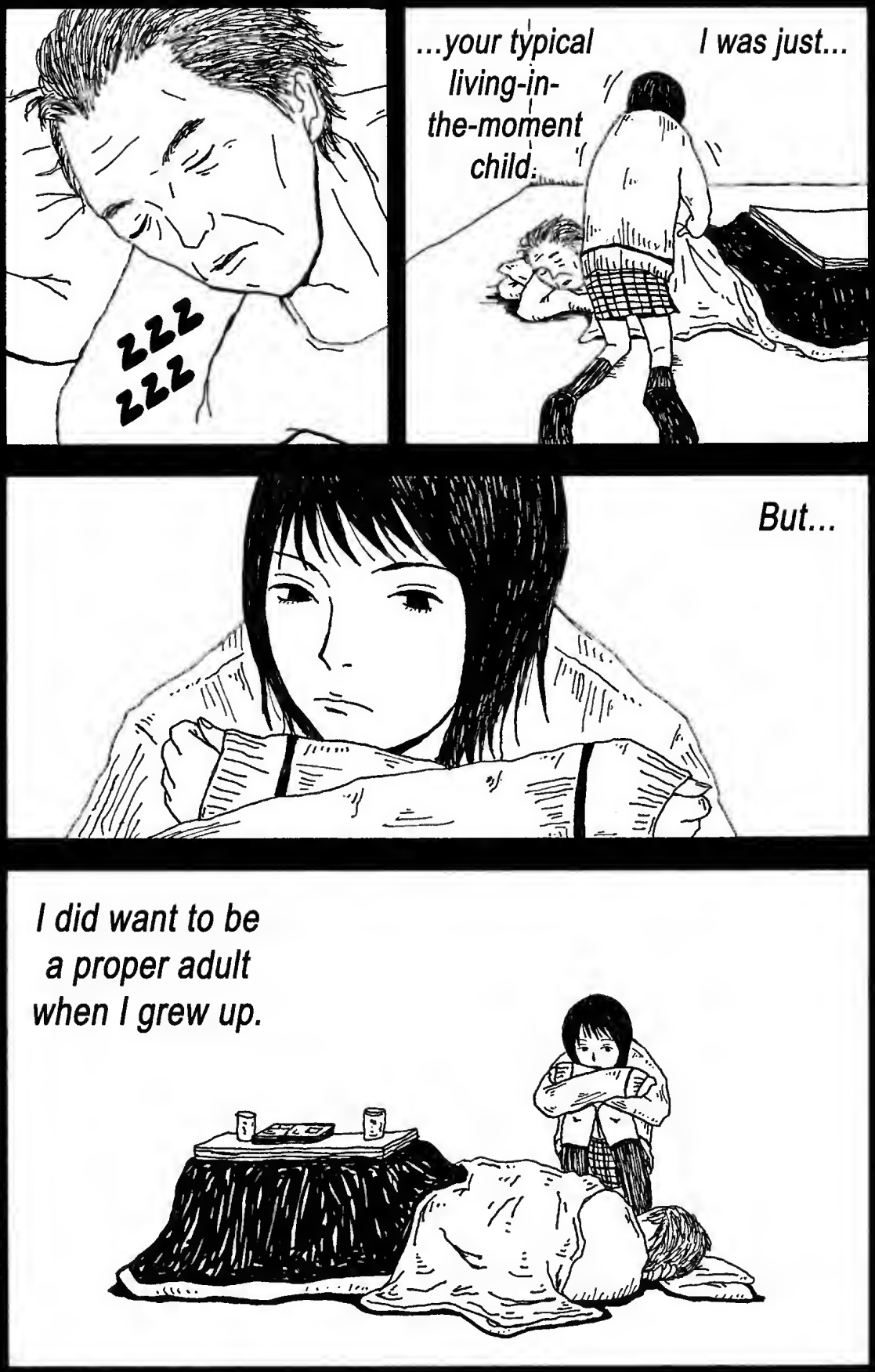

UM.
wooo
weee
YEAH?

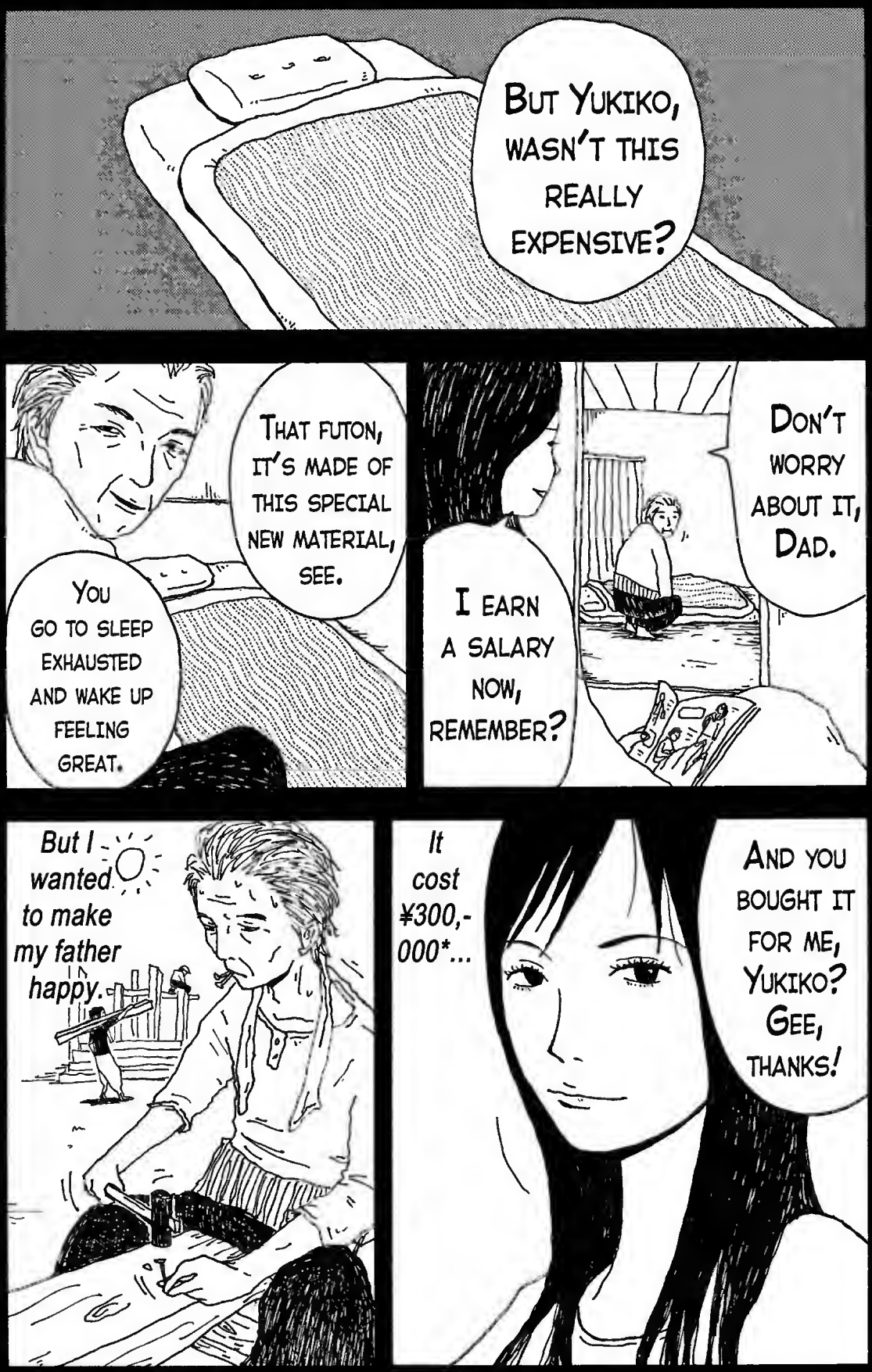
So you don't want any...
OH, OKAY...
H


WELL, GOSH...
I was afraid you might...
I'M NOT GOING TO GO KILL MYSELF, OKAY?
At least not right away.
COULD YOU PLEASE STOP CALLING ME ALL THE TIME?
I mean, every single day, jeez...
What is your problem?
I MEAN, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME ANYWAY?
YOU'RE JUST THIS BURGER JOINT MANAGER!
H
HUH?
OH, THAT'S JUST MY NICKNAME.
I'M SIMPLY A LOWLY EMPLOYEE.
The real manager's a lot younger than me.
A LOWLY EMPLOYEE?
YEAH, BUT THIS IS WHAT I DO ON THE SIDE. MY REAL WORK IS DIFFERENT.
YOUR REAL WORK?
Trainee
Oguro

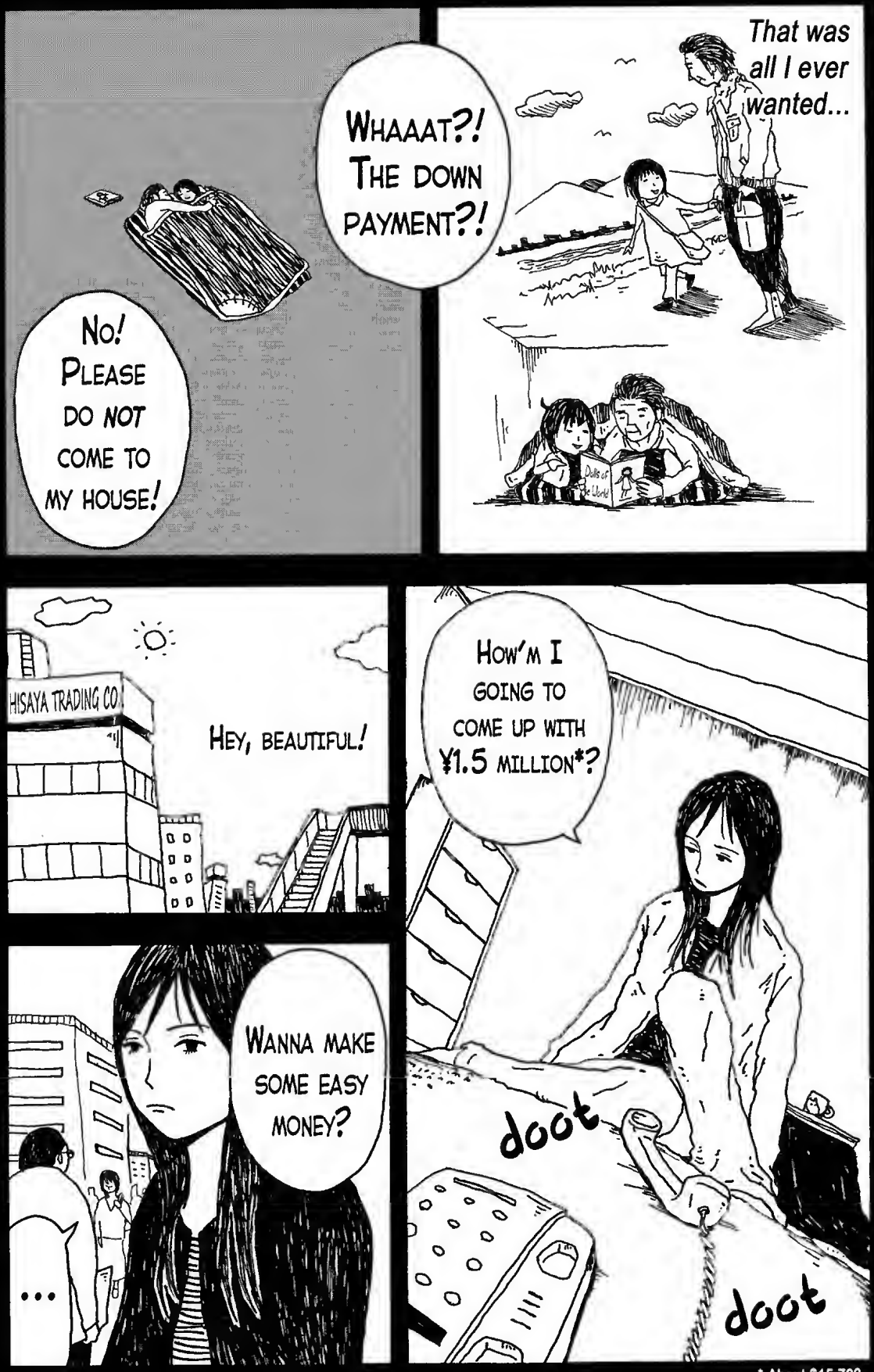
I'M A MANGA ARTIST.
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW...
YOU JUST MADE THAT UP, DIDN'T YOU?
NOT PUBLISHED YET, THOUGH.
But I hope to be?
NO, IT'S TRUE!
DO YOU THINK I'M STUPID?
I'M STAKING MY LIFE ON IT! MY LIFE!!
I'M LEAVING!

I think I was a pretty normal child.
I'M HOOOME.
...and I always just assumed the future would show up on its own.
Oh, Dad!
I really enjoyed growing up...
I certainly never gave a thought as to whether my life had any meaning or not.

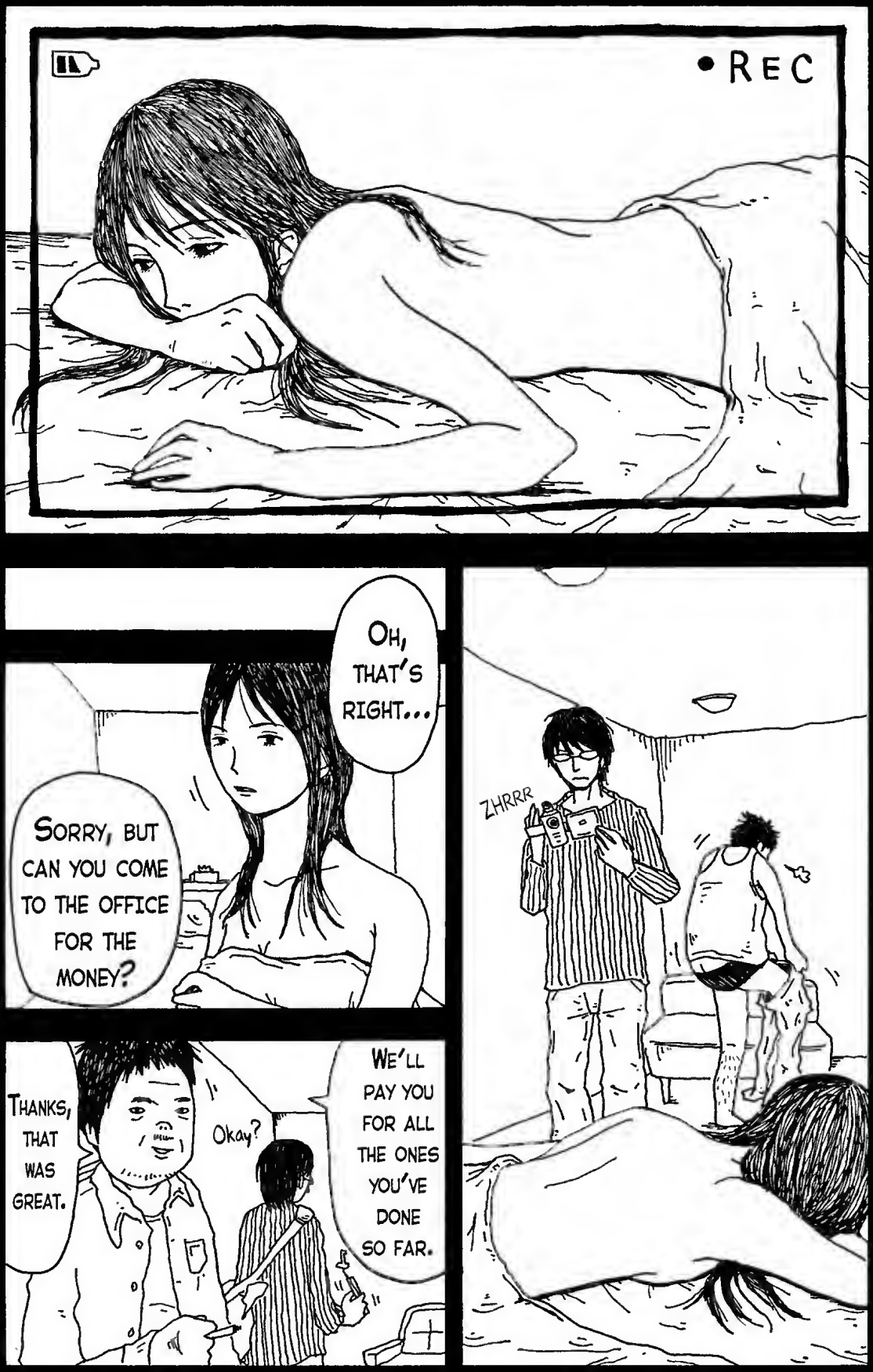

ZZZ
ZZZ
...your typical living-in-the-moment child.
I was just...
But...
I did want to be a proper adult when I grew up.

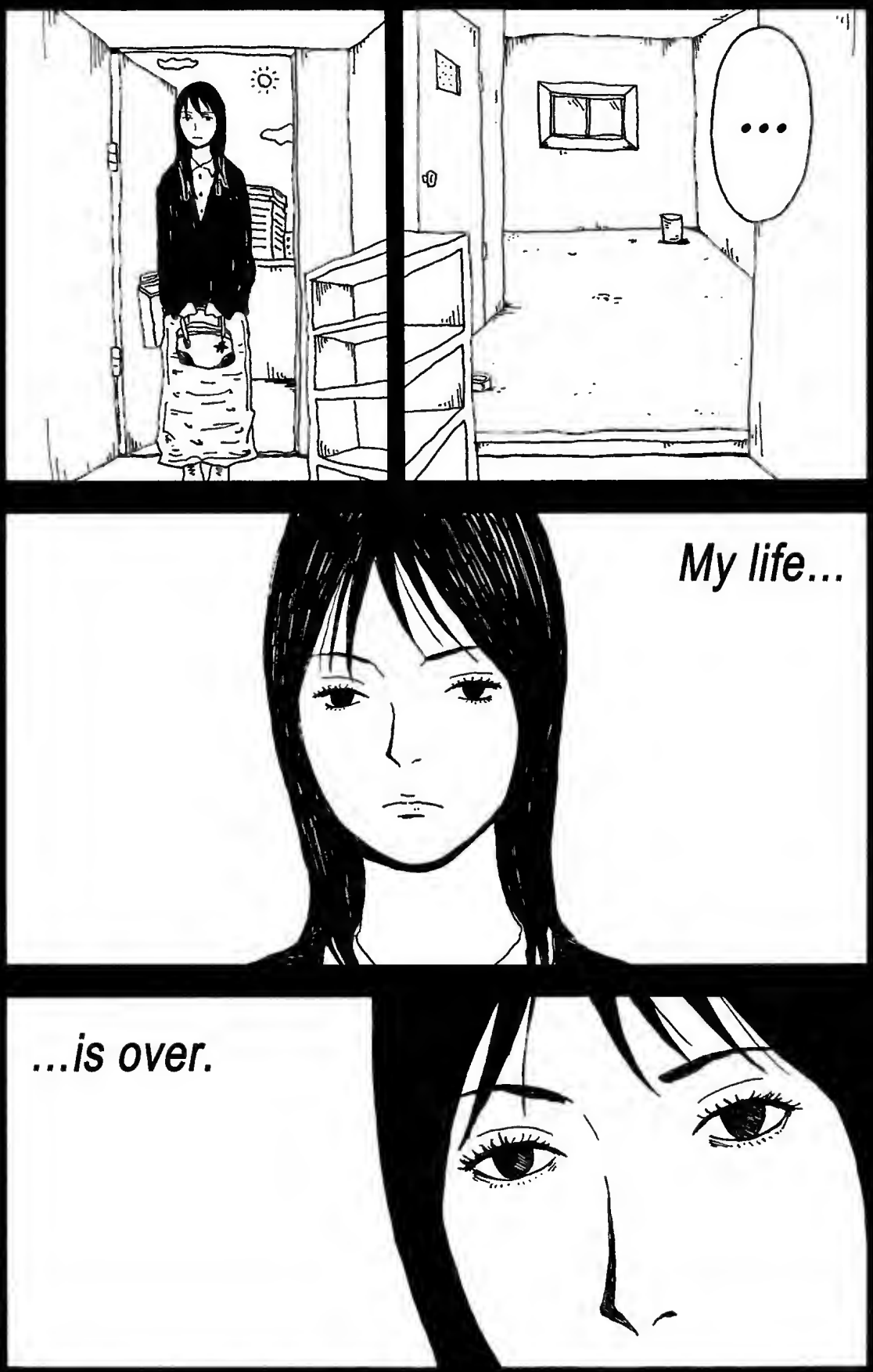

But Yukiko, wasn't this really expensive?
That futon, it's made of this special new material, see.
You go to sleep exhausted and wake up feeling great.
Don't worry about it, Dad.
I earn a salary now, remember?
But I wanted to make my father happy.
It cost ¥300,-000*...
And you bought it for me, Yukiko? Gee, thanks!

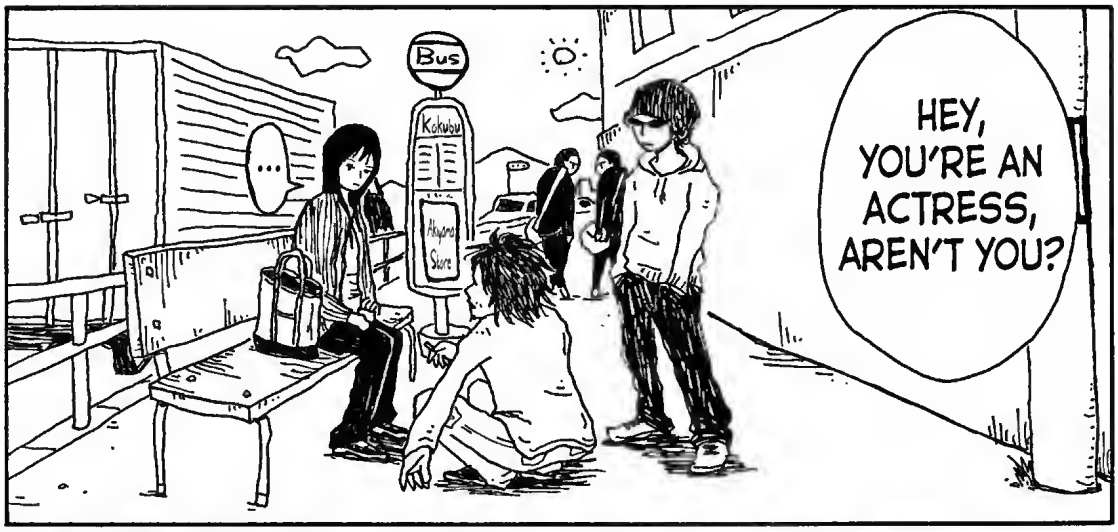
* About $3,170.


That was all I ever wanted...
Dolls of the World
WHAAAT?! THE DOWN PAYMENT?!
NO! PLEASE DO NOT COME TO MY HOUSE!
HISAYA TRADING CO.
HEY, BEAUTIFUL!
HOW'M I GOING TO COME UP WITH ¥1.5 MILLION*?
doot
doot
WANNA MAKE SOME EASY MONEY?
...

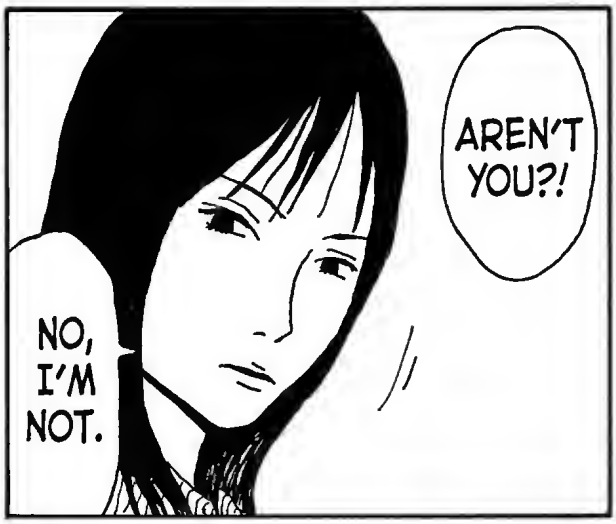
* About $15,700.


• REC
OH, THAT'S RIGHT...
SORRY, BUT CAN YOU COME TO THE OFFICE FOR THE MONEY?
ZHRRR
WE'LL PAY YOU FOR ALL THE ONES YOU'VE DONE SO FAR.
Okay?
THANKS, THAT WAS GREAT.


...
My life...
...is over.

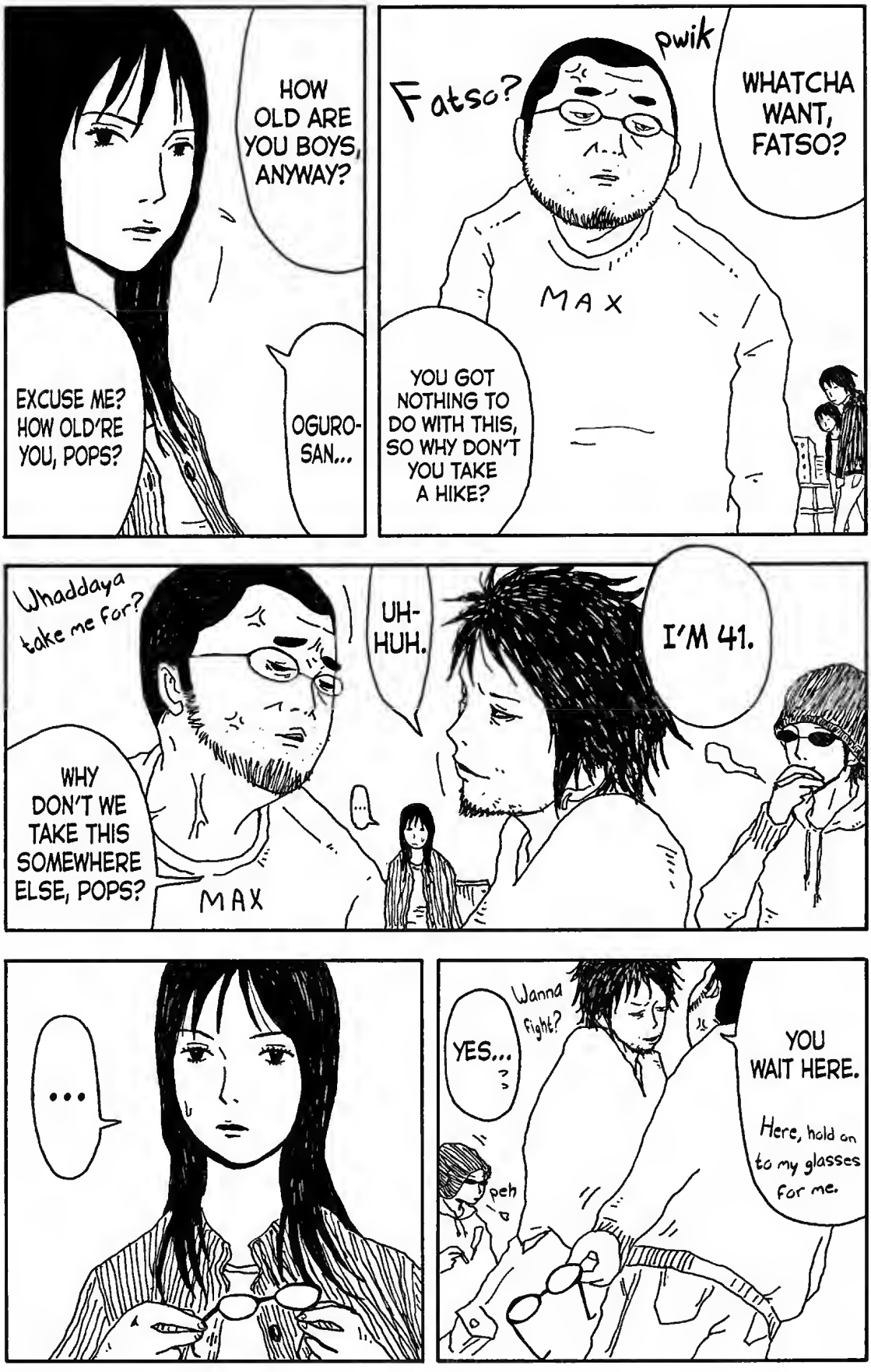

Bus
Kokubu
Akiyama Store
...
HEY, YOU'RE AN ACTRESS, AREN'T YOU?

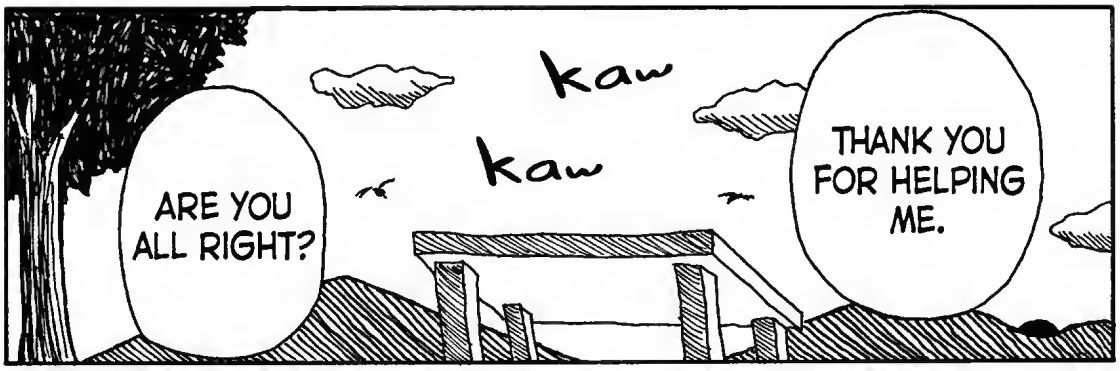
OH, COME ON. I KNOW I'VE SEEN YOU BEFORE.
In fact, I'm a fan.
SO WHERE'RE YOU GOING? WANNA HANG OUT?

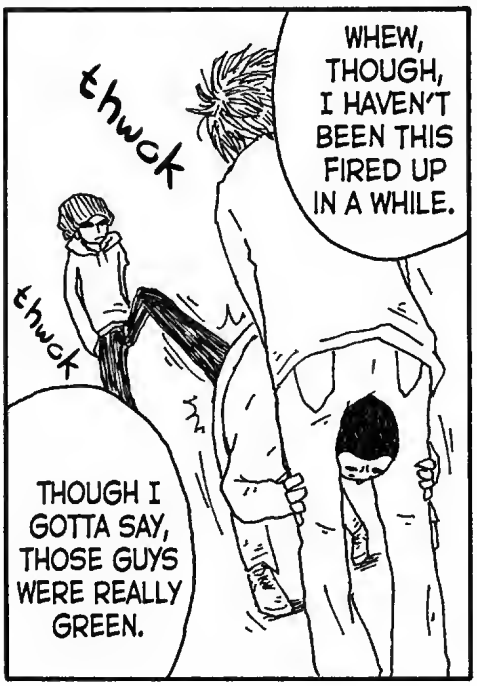

AREN'T YOU?!
NO, I'M NOT.

HEY!
Kokubu
HUH?

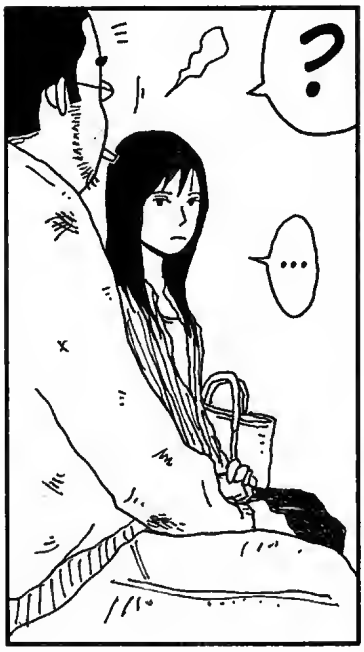
YOU CAN TELL ME, COME ON.
Don't tell my boyfriend ♥
Amateur Night
YOU WERE IN AN ADULT VIDEO, WEREN'T YOU?
Ayumi, age 22

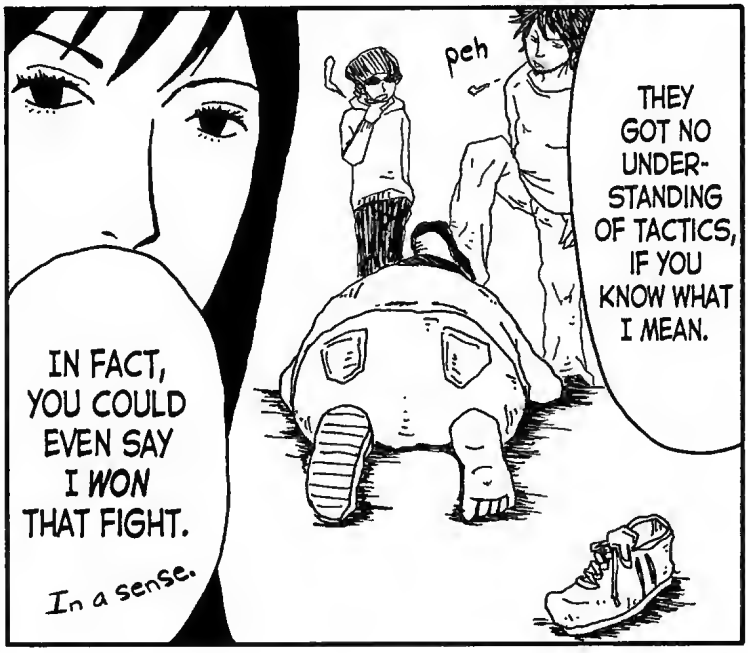

HOW OLD ARE YOU BOYS, ANYWAY?
EXCUSE ME? HOW OLD'RE YOU, POPS?
OGURO-SAN...
Fatso?
pwik
WHATCHA WANT, FATSO?
MAX
YOU GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS, SO WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A HIKE?
Whaddaya take me for?
UH-HUH.
I'M 41.
WHY DON'T WE TAKE THIS SOMEWHERE ELSE, POPS?
MAX
...
Wanna fight?
YES...
?
peh
YOU WAIT HERE.
Here, hold on to my glasses for me.


kaw
kaw
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME.


thwack
thwack
WHEW, THOUGH, I HAVEN'T BEEN THIS FIRED UP IN A WHILE.
THOUGH I GOTTA SAY, THOSE GUYS WERE REALLY GREEN.

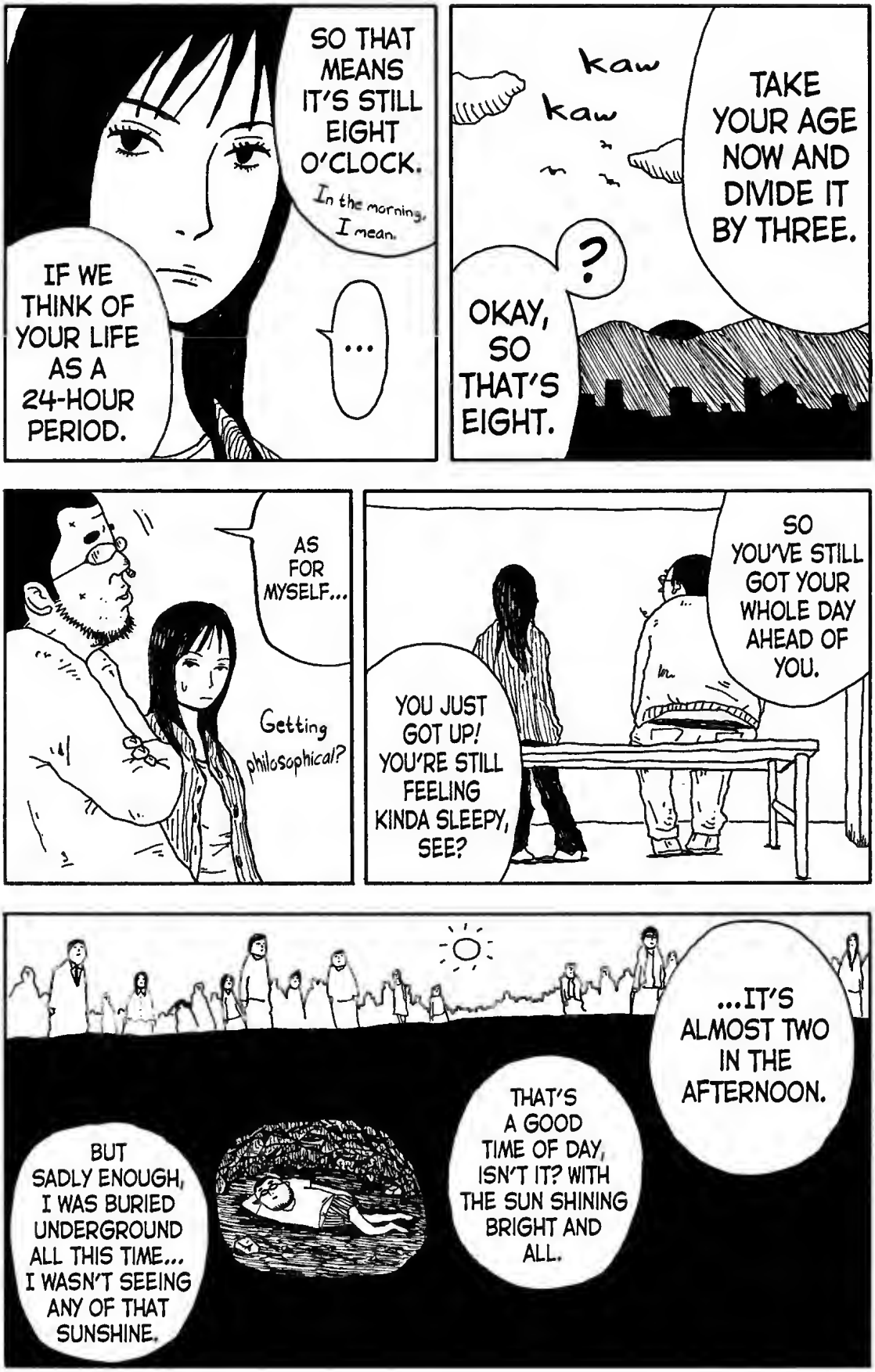
heh heh
It isn't half as bad as it looks.
OH, YEAH. I'M FINE!
I KNOW HOW TO TAKE IT, YOU KNOW? WAS A TIME WHEN I WAS KNOWN AS THE "SHOCK ABSORBER," ACTUALLY. BACK IN THE DAY.

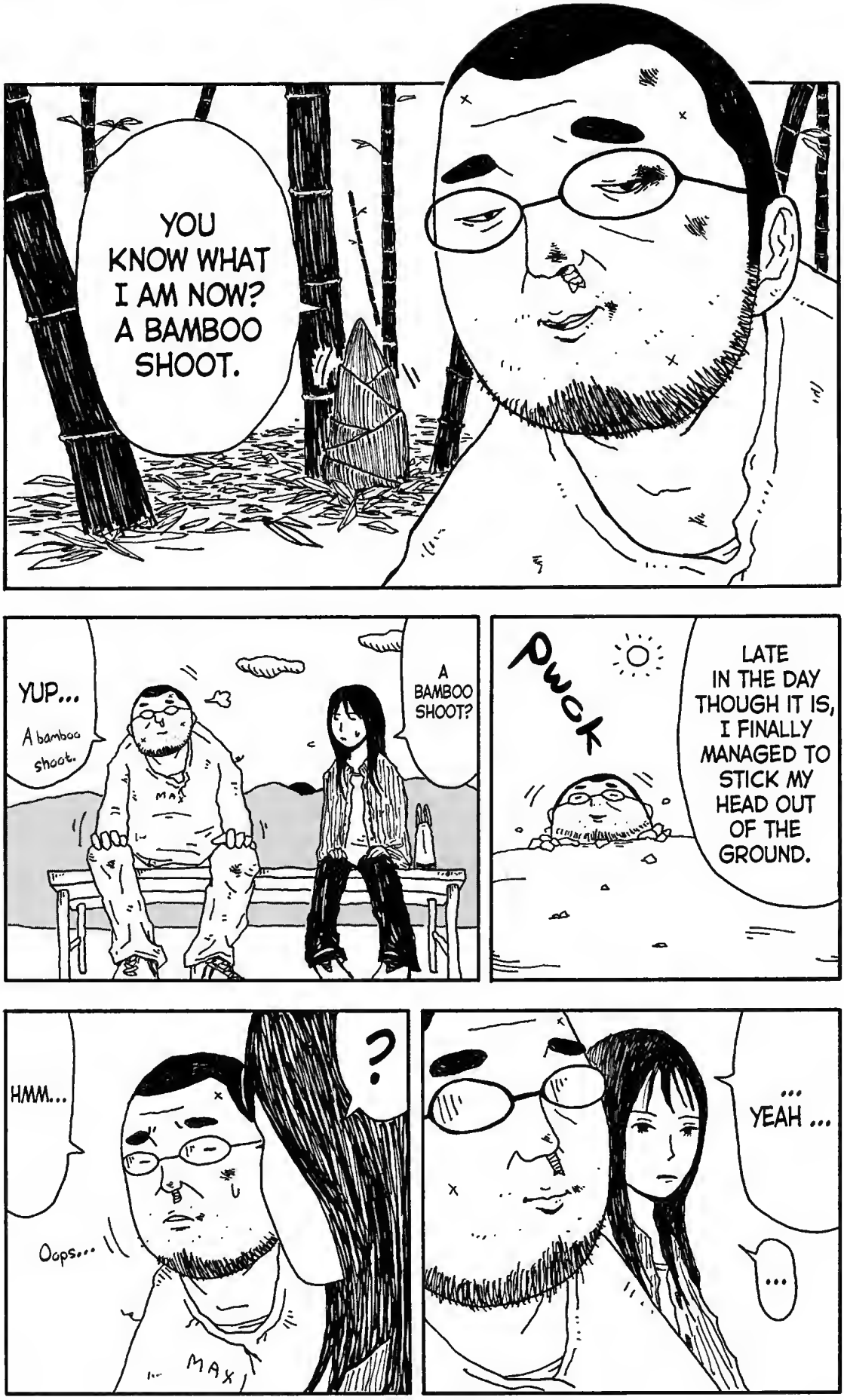

?
...

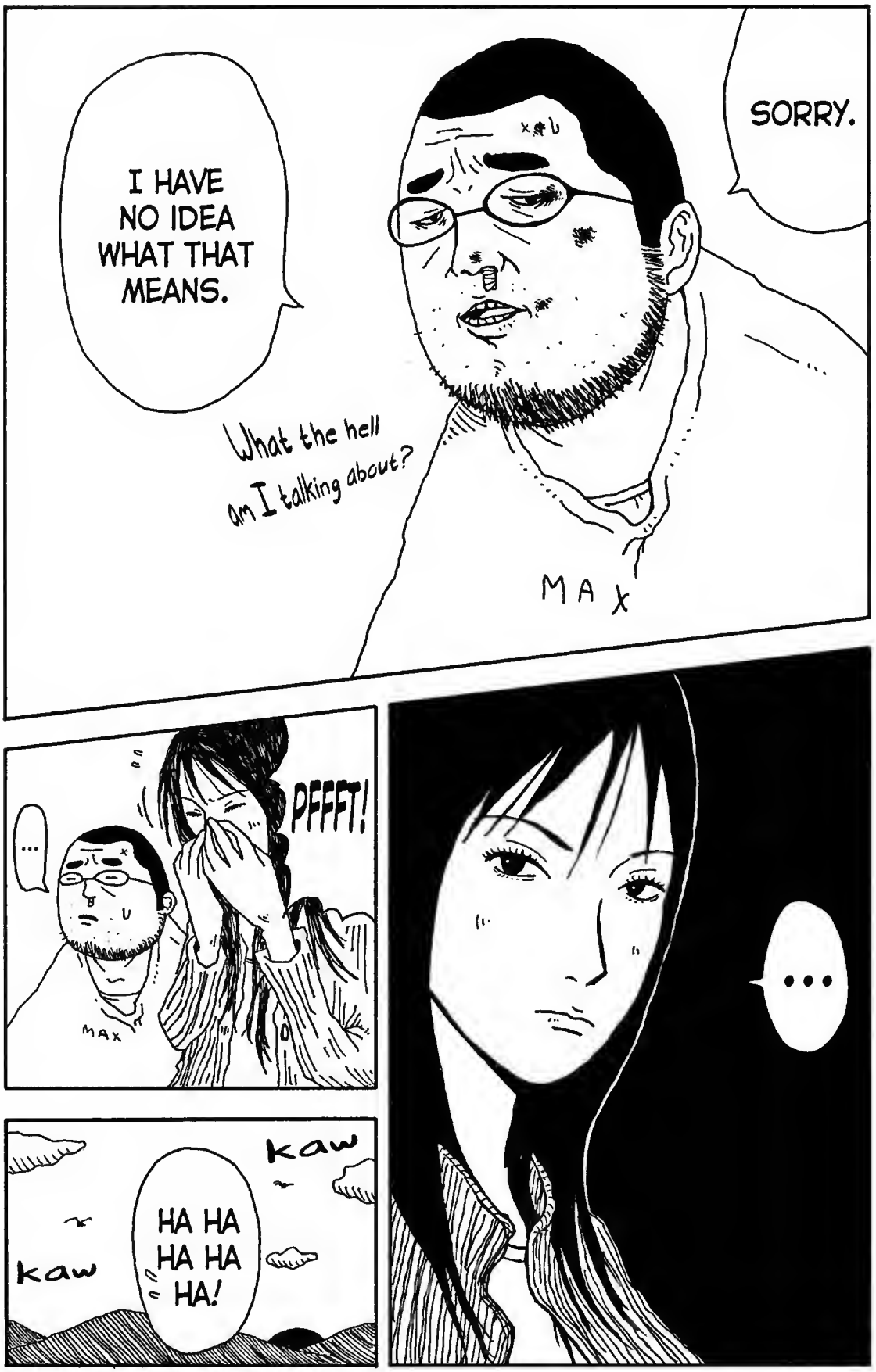

peh
THEY GOT NO UNDER-STANDING OF TACTICS, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
IN FACT, YOU COULD EVEN SAY I *WON* THAT FIGHT.
In a sense.

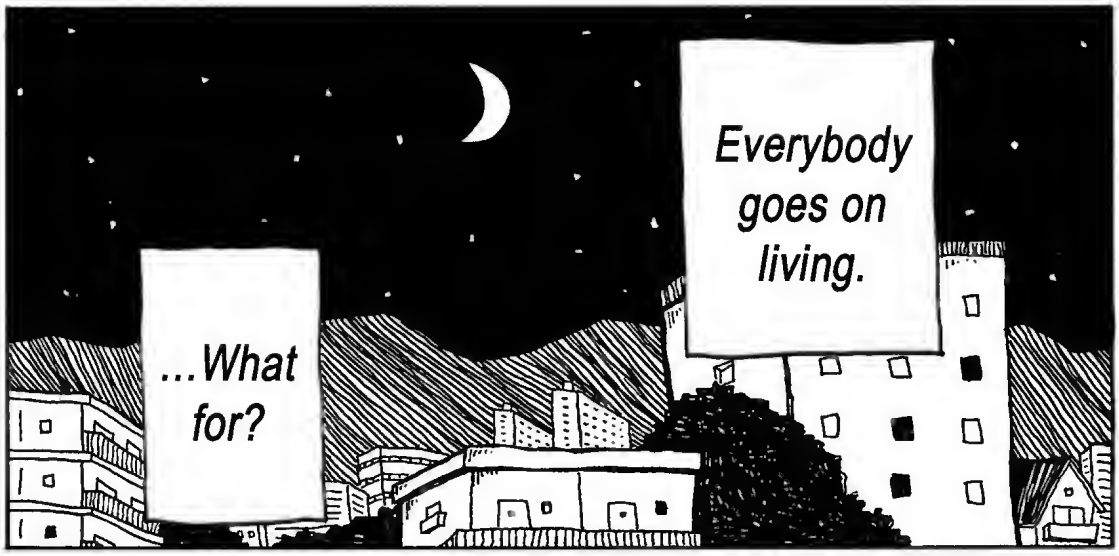
...
...
puff
puff
YOU WANT TO MAKE OUT?
NO, I DON'T...
MM, OF COURSE NOT...
OGURO-SAN.
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
turn
SURE, ASK ME ANYTHING YOU WANT!

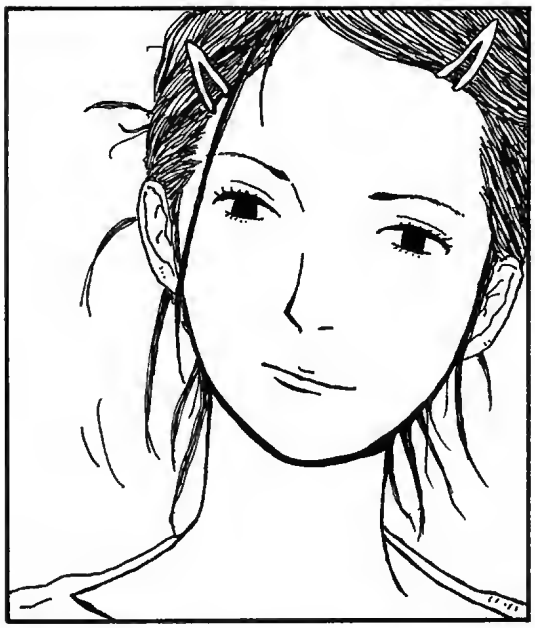
WHY DO YOU GO ON LIVING?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M HERE FOR. WHAT MY LIFE MEANS.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT TO DO WITH MYSELF...
Don't tell my boyfriend
Amateur Night
I JUST FEEL LIKE, YOU KNOW, MY LIFE'S OVER...
...
MAX
MAX


IF WE THINK OF YOUR LIFE AS A 24-HOUR PERIOD.
SO THAT MEANS IT'S STILL EIGHT O'CLOCK.
In the morning, I mean.
...
kaw
kaw
TAKE YOUR AGE NOW AND DIVIDE IT BY THREE.
?
OKAY, SO THAT'S EIGHT.
AS FOR MYSELF...
Getting philosophical?
YOU JUST GOT UP! YOU'RE STILL FEELING KINDA SLEEPY, SEE?
SO YOU'VE STILL GOT YOUR WHOLE DAY AHEAD OF YOU.
BUT SADLY ENOUGH, I WAS BURIED UNDERGROUND ALL THIS TIME... I WASN'T SEEING ANY OF THAT SUNSHINE.
THAT'S A GOOD TIME OF DAY, ISN'T IT? WITH THE SUN SHINING BRIGHT AND ALL.
...IT'S ALMOST TWO IN THE AFTERNOON.


YOU KNOW WHAT I AM NOW? A BAMBOO SHOOT.
YUP... A bamboo shoot.
A BAMBOO SHOOT?
PWCK
LATE IN THE DAY THOUGH IT IS, I FINALLY MANAGED TO STICK MY HEAD OUT OF THE GROUND.
HMM...
?
Oops...
MAX
...
YEAH ...
...

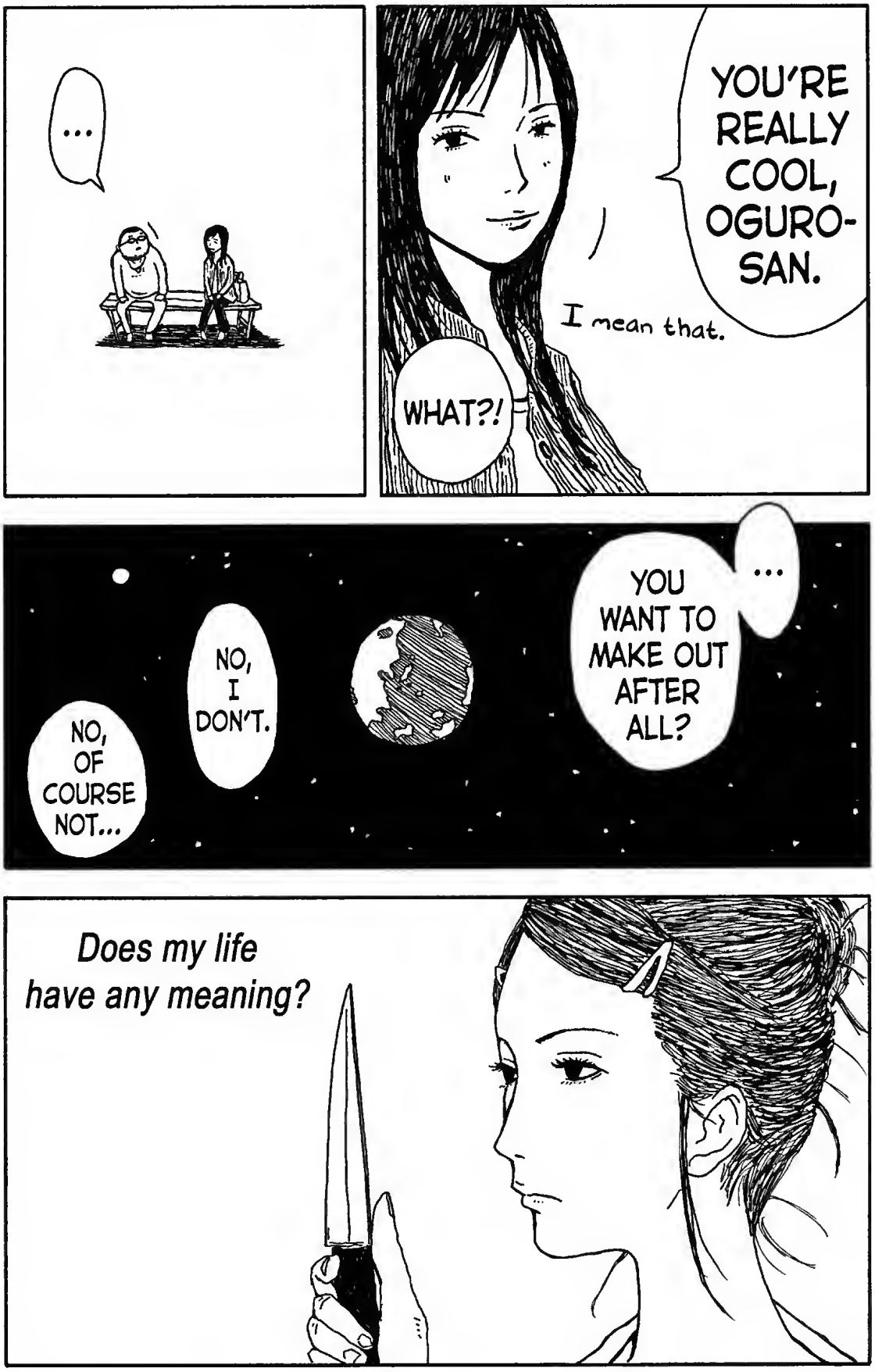

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT MEANS.
SORRY.
What the hell am I talking about?
MAX
PFFFT!
...
MAX
kaw
kaw
HA HA HA HA HA!
...


Everybody goes on living.
...What for?



I don't know.
ZZZZZZ

MAN, I'M NOT EVEN SURE I SHOULD GO ON LIVING.


...
YOU'RE REALLY COOL, OGURO-SAN.
I mean that.
WHAT?!
...
YOU WANT TO MAKE OUT AFTER ALL?
NO, I DON'T.
NO, OF COURSE NOT...
Does my life have any meaning?

I think not knowing if your life means anything is perfectly fine.

I don't know, and that's okay.

All I need to do...

...is just...

SHWAK

The End

extra poem: "I'm Fine"

I've fallen down so many times, my knees are a mess
But I think I'm pretty good at falling down

People use strange nicknames for me
I think I'm really popular

I can't seem to make any friends
I think people are just holding back to be polite

People get so mad at me, they tremble
I think they see a lot of potential in me

I see a stranger in the mirror looking back at me
I think he looks like a nice guy

I have this numbness from my neck down my left arm
I think it's a temporary symptom

I'm fine
I pay my rent
I eat my vegetables
I laugh a lot
Look at how much I've grown!

Thank you, Mom, for having me.

I'll Give It My All... Tomorrow

Volume 1

VIZ Signature Edition

Story & Art by Shunju Aono

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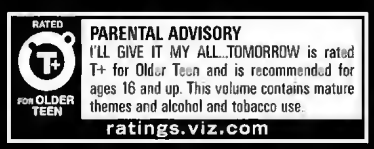
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